

INCREASING THE APPOINTMENT OF WOMEN AS PASTORS  
IN THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY IN THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION

A THESIS-PROJECT

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To the Daughters and Handmaidens of the Church  
who will fulfill prophecy

I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.

— Acts 10:34-35

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AG: Assemblies of God

COGOP: Church of God of Prophecy

COGIC: Church of God in Christ

MAR: Mid-Atlantic Region

SOPAS: School of Practical and Advanced Studies

## ABSTRACT

Increasing the appointment of women as pastors in the Church of God of Prophecy in the Mid-Atlantic Region is the focus of this thesis, based on the fact that the membership of Pentecostal churches has been predominantly female from the start of the movement in North America, yet in the arena of leadership, women are not proportionately represented. The survey of aspiring female pastors is geared to assess their presuppositions of the role of pastor, and their confidence in the pursuit of the call to that ministry. This will also address the hindrances, real and perceived that these women experience in themselves and from others. This thesis seeks to investigate the probable causes, using the Mid-Atlantic Region of the Church of God of Prophecy as a case study. Gates have been swung open and pathways created to facilitate the inflow of women who seek to fulfill God's call to pastor, but no significant increase has been noted. The aspect of mentoring as a needed agency is also explored. The voices of the licensed female ministers are heard concerning their role and relevance in ministry, and their perception of pastoral leadership in the church.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

#### Overview

This chapter will seek to outline salient occurrences in the development of female leadership in the Church of God of Prophecy (COGOP), and its consequential impact on the Mid-Atlantic Region (MAR). The underpinning element of this project is the Church's unsatisfactory growth pattern in North America, as evidenced by a decrease in membership of approximately three thousand plus, over the last two years, 2014-2016.<sup>1</sup> The COGOP in its present form started in 1923 after a split with the main body, which continued functioning as The Church of God (Cleveland). The COGOP ecclesial portrait included a teaching of exclusivity which framed that church as the one true church. This doctrine proved particularly harmful to the body; it is believed that this generated rejection from outside and stagnation from within. This issue was addressed in 1984 by the then General Overseer, at the 88<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, by calling the Church to repentance, and a change of focus, which would involve an in-depth evaluation and correction of ecclesiastical positions and teachings. An excerpt from his message is as follows:

For all sectarian attitudes we have held and exhibited, attitudes which are unholy and spiritually divisive, we ask God's and your forgiveness. A lost world awaits the witness of genuine Christian unity, which expresses truly the love of the savior who remains their only hope. It remains that all men will know we are true disciples of Christ by the love we express toward one another and toward the lost.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *99<sup>th</sup> International Assembly Journal: Including Assembly Business Minutes* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2017), 193.

<sup>2</sup> Adrian L. Varlack, *Foundations: The Church of God of Prophecy: Concise History, Polity, Doctrine, and Future* (Cleveland, TN.: White Wing Publishing House, 2010), 179.

The year 1984 represented a watershed juncture in the COGOP. As part of the church's response to the Holy Spirit's call to repentance, the leadership, ten years later in 1994, introduced the maxim, "Turning to the harvest" at the International Assembly.<sup>3</sup> We must bear in mind that from 1923 when A.J. Tomlinson restarted as the COGOP with two to three thousand members, that number increased to five hundred and forty-six thousand world-wide by 2000.<sup>4</sup> The cycle of global increase was reflected in the statistics presented at the 99<sup>th</sup> Assembly in 2016 with global membership at over one million. The North American numbers, however, run contrary to the prevailing trend. What is reflected as the North American problem is also experienced in some regions. The Mid-Atlantic Region falls within this scope, which precipitates the need to examine all contributing factors and especially whether there are internal weaknesses in the way the church is projected to the community and whether there is an under-utilization of the resources God has placed in His church with respect to the appointment of more women as pastors in this region.

The first section of this chapter examines the significance of Pentecost and its impact on denominations and sects in the early and mid-1900s, as they struggle to establish themselves in the ecumenical landscape. The second section will survey the religious context in the formative years of the COGOP and the significance of social and societal influences in its ecclesiastical formation. Also, the correlation of the role and function of women in ministry, in the COGOP, in view of the expressed challenge to the Church in 1994 to 'turn to the harvest'.<sup>5</sup> What this call has highlighted, is the growing

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<sup>3</sup> Varlack, *Foundations*, 181.

<sup>4</sup> Varlack, *Foundations*, 80.

<sup>5</sup> Varlack, *Foundations*, 179.

need for the Church to use the abundant resource of its predominantly female membership. The third section evaluates the hermeneutical framework for gender roles, in the response of different Pentecostal entities to the aspect of women in ministry which is the focus of this thesis, with an anticipated outcome of the equipping and empowering of gifts and ministries in the Church, male and female, to accomplish the task of harvesting. The project methodology is outlined in the fourth section, which will include firstly surveys of licensed female ministers in the MAR, and secondly, interviews with female pastors currently serving for the purpose of determining strategies and identifying hindrances to utilizing more qualified female ministers in pastoral positions.

### **Pentecost and Women**

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the early 1900s in North America was a world-renowned event, both in its unique nature and international influence. The perception prevailed that the prophetic promise of Joel 2:28-29 was being fulfilled as sons and daughters participated equally in anointing and gifting which also included the consideration of the restoration of dignity and value to women in ministry and in the work of the church. The initial years of the Azusa experience witnessed not only “the color line was washed away in the blood,”<sup>6</sup> but also gender bias being over-ruled by the Holy Spirit, as Bartleman reported, “The Lord was liable to burst through anyone. It might be a child, a woman, or a man.”<sup>7</sup> Grant Wacker surmises that Pentecostals offered a self-consciously theological justification for women’s public ministry, which stemmed

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<sup>6</sup> Augustus Cerillo Jr., “Frank Bartleman: Pentecostal ‘Lone Ranger’ and Social Critic,” in *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, James R. Goff and Grant Wacker ed. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 114.

<sup>7</sup> Cerillo Jr., “Frank Bartleman” in *Portraits of a Generation*, 114.

from their understanding of the Day of Pentecost.<sup>8</sup> The following years testify to extensive, fervent missionary outreach nationally and internationally by both men and women, single women, as well as those married and working as a team with their husbands. These Spirit-empowered brothers and sisters moved as the Spirit led, experiencing both acceptance and rejection from the established traditional churches and the general-public. The Pentecostal landscape in North America at present is heavily populated by sects and denominations of all shades and sizes with peculiarities in ecclesiology which have served to establish their identity.

A glimpse into the quest by women ministers of the Church of God (Cleveland), in those early days, reveals the general acknowledgement of the authority of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. In line with many other Holiness and Pentecostal churches of that era, numerous references to “men and women” can be found in the COG Minutes and in the writings of Tomlinson who, as reported by Alexander, wrote in *The Last Great Conflict*, “It is our purpose to encourage both men and women, young and old; to undertake great things for God and expect great things from God.”<sup>9</sup>

The place of female leadership in Pentecostalism continues to generate much debate and discussion, starting from the formative years of the movement, when their sheer numbers merited concern. “From the beginning, women were attracted to the movement in larger numbers than men and took on roles from bench members and worshipers to Bible teachers, evangelists, and pastors.”<sup>10</sup> The struggle remains connected:

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<sup>8</sup> Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 163.

<sup>9</sup> Kimberly Ervin Alexander, *What Women Want: Pentecostal Women Ministers Speak for Themselves* (Lanham, MD.: Seymour Press, 2013), 22.

<sup>10</sup> Estrela Alexander, *Limited Liberty: The Legacy of Four Pentecostal Women Pioneers* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 14.

“In fact, a crucial component for women’s social emancipation came from women working to subvert the religious structures that tried to prohibit equality – not by turning away from God – but by providing an exegetical perspective that allowed for new hermeneutics, to reveal that the Bible was not meant to limit but to liberate.”<sup>11</sup> Jeanette Storms quotes Cindy Jacobs who comments that Women are not token accessories in ministry. “They are a vital and integral part of God’s kingdom. If churches exclude women from leadership roles, then they diminish both their effectiveness in ministry and their witness to the power of the gospel.”<sup>12</sup> Moving from this disadvantaged position, many anointed women have launched out into ministry with confidence, because of the Holy Spirit, while others have tasked themselves with being agents of change, by writing and speaking out against flawed beliefs and misconstrued Scriptures. In relating the activities of the Puritan and Quaker women, MacHaffie writes, “Using biblical precedents and the ancient concept that they were merely instruments in the hands of God, some women also took on the role of prophet. This meant a variety of things in the seventeenth century: biblical exposition, personal testimony, warnings to the unsaved, and exhortation of the faithful.”<sup>13</sup>

Janet Everts Powers highlights the achievement of one remarkable woman in the Pentecostal movement whose legacy lives on:

For Pentecostals, the church is seen as a Spirit-baptized community of prophets, called to prophetic vocation as witnesses to the Gospel. This distinctive view of Spirit-empowered ministry, which Roger Stronstad has dubbed “the prophethood of all believers,” has been one of Pentecostalism’s major contributions to the

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<sup>11</sup> Kristen Welch and Abraham Antonio Ruelas, *The Role of Female Seminaries on the Road to Social Justice for Women* (Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 2015), 17.

<sup>12</sup> Jeanette Anne Storms, *Leadership Development of Women Pastors in the Pentecostal Tradition* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 2000), 10.

<sup>13</sup> Barbara J. MacHaffie, *Her Story: Women in Christian Tradition*, 2nd edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 104.



twentieth century church. But most Pentecostals and those who study them seem to have forgotten where they got this distinctive doctrine of ministry, and why this doctrine was originally developed. This view of Spirit-baptism was developed by Phoebe Palmer, one of the more influential Holiness teachers of the nineteenth century, as part of her argument for the ministry of women.<sup>14</sup>

The birth of Pentecostalism ushered in a time when the anointing of the Holy Spirit was highly regarded, and spirit-empowered ministry was unquestioned, whether the minister was male or female. This egalitarian climate quickly changed with the institutionalization of the churches, thereby imposing gradual restrictions on the public ministry of women. In the face of obstacles, history testifies to the audacity of many women of God, displaying both their triumphs and their failures. Failure was not an option, as such an occurrence raised questions as to the ability of women to lead and function at higher levels of authority. At the same time, as observed by Judith Hodge in her paper on “obstacle women face”, most of the women who played such high profile and significant roles, displayed several strong personality traits including authority, power, and the presence of God that could be emulated by current female ministers.<sup>15</sup> However, these are the very traits that contribute to a recurring area of marriage conflict in relationships of women clergy.

### **Women in Leadership in the COGOP**

In June 1903, A. J. Tomlinson joined The Holiness Church at Camp Creek with the understanding that it was the Church of God of the bible. This church was organized in 1902 by R. G. Spurling as the continuation of an organization he previously started in

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<sup>14</sup> Janet Everts Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” in *Phillip’s Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series Book 104, Estrela Alexander and Amos Yong ed. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers), L 3015-3021, Kindle. 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Judith T. Hodge, *Obstacles Women Face in Christian Leadership: A Church Model for Developing Female Leaders in the Prophetic Office of Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in the U.S. Virgin Islands* (Virginia Beach: UMI, 2010), 36.

1886. The Church of God (Cleveland TN) claim Spurling as their founding father, while the Church of God of Prophecy (COGOP) acknowledges Tomlinson as their founder.

Both of these denominations share a unified history under A. J. Tomlinson as General Overseer up to 1923 when a significant disruption occurred. It is notable that the theology formulated in those early years still impacts the role and function of women in ministry in both organizations. The largest untapped resource in the COGOP is its female membership, which is greater than 65% in North America. Published demographic data stating male/female ratio in churches is not easily obtainable but numbers from the U. S. Census Bureau along with empirical and oral evidence contribute to this conclusion. This has been so from the early years, evidenced in the minutes of the 1907 Assembly as reported by Lisa Stephenson:

An issue was made by some concerning the exceeding number of female members compared to male within the denomination. Following this comment the minutes note that “special mention” was made of the significant positions that women occupied during the time of Christ and the apostles. There is no indication of whether these comments were pejorative or not. On the one hand, they could signal that some among the Church of God were troubled by the large number of women in the denomination and thus the comment following was to assure those disturbed that it was quite in accord with the Bible that women have a part in the church. On the other hand, the comments could represent persons who recognized the large number of women in the denomination as a sign of the restoration of the early church and were highlighting this for favorable reasons.<sup>16</sup>

The Census Bureau’s data for 1936 confirms the predominance of women in the movement. Under Church of God, in which they combined Church of God (Cleveland) and COGOP, Male = 13, 803 and Female = 30,943.<sup>17</sup> Membership of other Pentecostal

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<sup>16</sup> Lisa P. Stephenson, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies*, vol. 9, *Dismantling the Dualisms for American Pentecostal Women in Ministry: A Feminist-Pneumatological Approach* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 24-25.

<sup>17</sup> “U. S. Bureau of the Census 1936,” Church of God, Bulletin No. 55, Table 1 & 3, accessed April 18, 2017, [www2.census.gov](http://www2.census.gov).

denominations at that time reflect a similar trend: Barfoot & Sheppard records these findings:

Assemblies of God (AG)

Male:	53,902	Female:	91,849
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Church of God in Christ (COGIC)

Male:	8,896	Female:	22,504 <sup>18</sup>
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The ecclesiology of the church was framed by R. G. Spurling and A. J. Tomlinson in the formative years as they searched for the true church. Dale Coulter gives some insight into Tomlinson's heart and his mission to restore the "Church of the Bible":

It is not insignificant that Tomlinson commends the minutes of the seventh General Assembly (1912) to those who "are or may become interested in the re-establishment of the Bible Church with all of its former graces, gifts and glory." What emerges from this data is an extensive debate about the nature and purpose of the church within the early history of the Church of God that culminated in a well-developed ecclesiology. While many may take issue with certain features of this ecclesiological outlook, there is no mistake that it represents a prominent — albeit neglected — feature of early Pentecostalism in the United States.<sup>19</sup>

Concerning women, the conclusions are less definitive. Alexander and Gause state that from near the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, church leaders struggled with allotting a proper place for women in the church. "What began as a dynamic and egalitarian movement where "everybody's a preacher," regardless of race or gender,

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<sup>18</sup> Charles H. Barfoot & Gerald T. Sheppard, "Prophetic vs Priestly: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches," *Review of Religious Research* 22, no. 1 (September 1980): 3.

<sup>19</sup> Dale M. Coulter, "The Development of Ecclesiology in the Church of God (Cleveland TN): A Forgotten Contribution," *Pneuma* 29, issue 1 (March 1, 2007): 59-85.

quickly developed into a more structured and governed network of new denominations and organizations, led by strong men.”<sup>20</sup>

The COGOP like other organizations experienced similar conflicts with an early ruling by A. J. Tomlinson that women should “have no active part in the governmental affairs of the church.”<sup>21</sup> Also included was a clarification that the author was not against women ministers, just women speaking, voting, etc. in business conference.

In the COGOP much has changed, yet much remains the same for women in ministerial leadership. “There are now no restrictions to women’s participation in all aspects of Church ministry with the exception of the ordaining of elders, which is still considered as a biblical role for males.”<sup>22</sup> This release occurred in 1996 as documented in the minutes of the General Assembly, but in the twenty years since, the appointment of women as pastors in the COGOP has not remarkably increased, bearing in mind that the membership of this church continues to be female dominated. Jesse A. Hoover writes concerning a similar problem in the Assemblies of God:

Earlier considerations of the AG’s track record concerning women in the ministry, largely written in the 1980s and early nineties, have tended to reflect such a skepticism towards the denomination’s accomplishments. The classic article on this subject, written by Charles Barfoot and Gerald Sheppard in 1980, utilized the minutes of the General Councils of the Assemblies of God and relevant statistics to show that despite its initial ‘prophetic’ support for clergywomen, the denomination had quickly and dramatically shifted to a ‘priestly’ conservative position concerned with limiting women’s roles within a more institutionalized framework.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Kimberly Ervin Alexander and R H. Gause, *Women in Leadership: A Pentecostal Perspective*, Pentecostal Leadership Series (Cleveland, TN.: Center for Pentecostal Leadership & Care, 2006), 14.

<sup>21</sup> A. J. Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 1984), 71.

<sup>22</sup> Varlack, *Foundations*, 159.

<sup>23</sup> Jesse A. Hoover, “Thy Daughters Shall Prophesy: The Assemblies of God, Inerrancy, and the Question of Clergywomen,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 21 (2012): 223.

The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is Holy Spirit initiated and instructed; therefore, expressions of this movement should reflect the divine purpose and place for its daughters. But there is much “growing up in Him” still lacking, as the Church seeks to embrace its true identity.

### **Statement of the Problem**

From as early as 1935 the COGOP had appointed women as overseas missionaries to the Caribbean islands of Barbados and Montserrat and also New Zealand in 1952. The scope of female ministers in North America, however, has fluctuated from liberal participation to increased restrictions. “In 1917, Tomlinson proposed a Bible Training School for the purpose of equipping men and women in bible and missionary training.”<sup>24</sup> Women have been acknowledged as essential helpers in the building movement of the church, but some scholars contend that, “As the Church of God and other classical Pentecostal denominations embraced the Evangelical movement, most conspicuously by uniting with other Evangelicals in 1948 with the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), it adopted NAE’s view of family and women’s roles.”<sup>25</sup> A look into the operations of the Church of God (Cleveland) seems to mirror the mood of the day as reported by their historian David Roebuck who reports that there was also a reversal in the understanding of the Scriptures with reference to women’s participation in the work of the church. “A major contributor to the women’s participation in the Church of God came from the rising influence of Evangelical and Fundamentalist interpretations of certain texts, often ignoring context and taking a non-

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<sup>24</sup> Alexander and Gause, *Women in Leadership*, 16.

<sup>25</sup> Alexander and Gause, *Women in Leadership*, 17.

narrative approach. The Tomlinson interpretation was fortified for the Church of God by its close association with those in Evangelical churches.”<sup>26</sup>

For fundamentalists, the Bible is the sole and absolute authority on all life. It is the infallible word of God and the biblical message is regarded as clear and unchanging and unchangeable. For them, all aspects of human life are subject to religious laws, which are based on biblical text and, consequently, believed to be of divine origin. It is this belief that the Bible is an unquestionable authority that does not require interpretation that has implications for women and their role and status in the family, marriage, and church ministry and, indeed society.<sup>27</sup>

Women’s ministry in the Church of God of Prophecy is in the process of moving from a very restricted role, to full ministerial participation according to the 1996 ruling of the General Assembly. A push for “all hands to the plough” has arisen and is accentuated by the need in the church for laborers, coupled with the acceptance and recognition of the resources God has already provided for the mission. The validation of licensed women needs to be a structured and deliberate process because of the disadvantaged position they are moving from. The North American COGOP is aged. The Barna survey reports the median age of pastors in 2017, is fifty-four years.<sup>28</sup> Empirical conclusion of the average age of the membership in North America is about fifty years.

Even though some ecclesiastical positions have been changed, such as the rejection of the doctrine of exclusivity, and the embrace of the appointment of women as pastors, these changes have not been systematically transmitted and disseminated to local congregations in a progressive manner that would stimulate interest and create motivation for those inclined. Therefore, the need arises for this case study which is focused on

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<sup>26</sup> Alexander and Bowers, *What Women Want*, 24.

<sup>27</sup> Judith Soares, “Eden after Eve: Christian Fundamentalism and Women in Barbados,” in *Nation Dance: Religion, Identity, and Cultural Difference in the Caribbean*, Patrick Taylor, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 106.

<sup>28</sup> David Kinnaman, “The State of Pastors,” *Barna Group*, accessed November 2, 2017. <http://www.barna.com/product/stateofpastors/>.

increasing the appointment of women as pastors in the MAR. Clifton and Grey captures the point in projecting that, “The presence of a Pentecostal hermeneutic with its constituent elements was not discernible in many of the denominational debates concerning female leadership in ministry.”<sup>29</sup>

There will always be women who understand the times and how God is moving in His Church. Lucille Turner, a Church of God (Cleveland) missionary, spent twenty-five years in India but was never hindered or embittered by the limitations existing at the time. “I’ve never stuck my foot in the door. I’ve never made one telephone call and asked anyone for any kind of meeting. If God doesn’t open up the door, Lucille Turner’s not going to be there. But if he opens the door, you better believe, I’m gonna be there. And I’m going to be prayed up, packed up and ready to preach or teach.”<sup>30</sup> She exemplified a clarity of vision and purpose which helped her to surmount the obstacles. She continues:

I count it a privilege to be a minister, a licensed minister, in the church. It’s a great privilege. But it is a limited privilege as [far as] organization is concerned. If my resources, if my inspiration, if my encouragement, if my nurture had to have its source in a body here or there or wherever, I would be depleted. I can’t answer those questions. I just know that [there’s] organization and God’s not like that. See? That’s a contrast. Cause he’s my chief employer.<sup>31</sup>

Some of these women were relatively unknown but left significant footprints as evangelists in the end-time harvest. Emma Cotton (1877-1952), an African American; she merits a mention here as she was able in her time to impact both the color and gender biases:

When we pick up her story again in the 1930’s, Cotton had become one of the few women who were friends with evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, founder of

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<sup>29</sup> Cheryl Catford, “Women’s Experiences: Challenges for Female Leaders in Pentecostal Contexts,” in *Raising Women Leaders: Perspectives on Liberating Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Contexts*, Shane Clifton and Jacqueline Grey ed. (Chester Hill, NSW: Australasian Pentecostal Studies, 2009), 20.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander and Yong, *Phillip’s Daughters*, 861.

<sup>31</sup> Alexander and Yong, *Phillip’s Daughters*, 861.

the five-thousand-member Angelus Temple and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, . . . On several occasions she and her husband Henry shared what had become one of the most visible pulpits in the Pentecostal movement.<sup>32</sup>

Her notable achievements did not just include preaching. Alexander reports that she held the further distinction of being one of only a small number of Azusa Street participants – few of them women – to attempt to write an eyewitness, though somewhat problematic account of the revival.<sup>33</sup>

### **Rationale for Ministry Project**

The ecumenical diversity that Pentecost represents is expressed in Acts 2:5 as inclusive of every nation under heaven, Jews and Gentiles. Frank D. Macchia comments that expanding the unity of the church toward that kind of diversity implied creative conflict, as Acts 11-15 and Galatians 1-2 reveal.<sup>34</sup> Macchia projects this ecumenical openness to the issue of female leadership in the Pentecostal movement:

Pentecost means that both sons and daughters prophesy. Apostolic sensitivity to order (1 Cor 14:34-35), cultural discretion (11:1-16), and the proper exercise of authority (1 Tim 2:12) were contextual matters meaningful to ancient situations. Applying such guidelines to our situations today requires sensitivity to the fact that narratives of women called to serve Christ as equal partners to men (e.g., Acts 2:17; Gal 3:28) will affect us today in many different situations somewhat differently than was possible in the ancient world. We must heed what the Spirit is saying to the churches in our times and places. In Acts 15, the churches affirmed Gentiles as equal partners based on the obvious fact that the Spirit anointed and gifted them as well as the Jews. Why Pentecostals have in general not followed this contextual hermeneutic with regard to the obvious anointing of women in a limitless variety of roles today is impossible in my view to explain in a way that justifies it.<sup>35</sup>

This aspect of hermeneutics is also addressed by Clifton and Grey:

The lack of a discernible Pentecostal hermeneutic militates against the presence of an embedded Pentecostal theology that is egalitarian. Additionally, the exclusion and repression of women from leadership positions in Pentecostal churches in

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<sup>32</sup> Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street*, 161.

<sup>33</sup> Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street*, 162.

<sup>34</sup> Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2006), 218.

<sup>35</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 220.



certain social and cultural contexts in different parts of the world suggest that a Pentecostal theology of women is neither embedded nor trans-cultural. Pentecostalism has shown itself to be a flexible religion: it is ‘new’ in every generation, culturally adaptable and develops theologically in each new context. Linked to this flexibility is often a pragmatism that can result in decisions based more upon ‘what looks good’ or ‘what works’ than upon any theological basis.

In practice, the effect of this lack of theological conviction at a denominational level is that there remains in local churches a measure of theological ambiguity regarding women in leadership. This presents a number of challenges to the female leader. Firstly, she cannot rely upon her colleagues to affirm or defend her position theologically when it is questioned. This can lead to a sense of isolation as she is conscious of her difference to her male counterparts. Secondly, the female leader finds herself having to continually defend her position to any who would challenge it. Most female leaders have undergone a process of biblical and theological research in order to ascertain that their call to ministry is valid. Having established this to her own satisfaction, she is required to convince others – a feat not required of male leaders. Often her ministry can be stymied by the energy required to defend her right to exist! Thirdly, the female leader is in a very vulnerable situation as she is reliant upon the theological convictions of others to retain her position.<sup>36</sup>

The specific focus of this thesis is on the Mid-Atlantic Region of the COGOP.

The issue affecting this region as well as others in North America is that of negligible to non-existent growth in membership.<sup>37</sup> This phenomenon contradicts the church’s mission and stated purpose as laid out in 1994. The General Overseer reminded the church that in 1984, the Holy Ghost moved powerfully in our General Assembly, calling the Church of God of Prophecy to repentance, “and we have sought to understand the full implications of this divine reprimand. We are reminded that we had drifted in many ways from a vital relationship with the Holy Spirit, that we were thus lacking in a deep compassion for the lost.”<sup>38</sup> Since that time, the mantra adopted and promoted was “Turning to the Harvest”, which is explained as, “a purposeful work. It will not just happen. Every local church will develop and implement a suitable plan to harvest their community. Additionally, all

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<sup>36</sup> Catford, “Women’s Experiences,” in *Raising Women Leaders*, 21.

<sup>37</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, 99<sup>th</sup> *International Assembly Journal*, 193.

<sup>38</sup> Varlack, *Foundations*, 179.

internal structures and resources of the Church of God of Prophecy will be focused on reaching people with the Gospel.”<sup>39</sup>

The MAR region (English) is comprised of forty-two churches and two missions in four states, Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland and the District of Columbia. The 2015 membership was reported at the regional convention to be 2,537 and the last reported figure for 2017 stands at 3,161, showing an increase of 409 new members. Some of this increase, however, can be attributed to organized churches coming into the COGOP fold, and not to direct soul-winning. The current theme adopted by this region is ‘Each One, Win One’, this is the challenge to each member with the purpose of doubling membership by 2019.

The cultural diversity of the MAR embraces African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Caribbean and African. Most local churches are predominately of one ethnos with a few racially and culturally mixed congregations. As neighborhoods undergo racial changes, the church transitions likewise, hence the racial divide. Declining membership over the years had caused churches to close and church buildings consequently sold. This trend can be reversed or stymied as occurred in District Three in the late 80s and early 90s. A local church building was abandoned when the neighborhood changed from Caucasian to predominantly African American. A sister-church in the district sent willing missionaries to revive the work and today there is a thriving and viable congregation. The task at hand right now is that each local church has been requested to implement programs and strategies to increase growth and diversity in their congregations. The harvesting process is purposeful and must be undertaken by laborers who are envisioned,

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<sup>39</sup> Varlack, *Foundations*, 181-182.

available and trained. There are seven female pastors in this region; one started the church, another inherited the church from a deceased spouse and five were appointed as the best qualified minister for the position. This thesis seeks to enquire into the under-utilization of women in pastoral positions with a view of expanding the missionary impact in our communities. It is also noteworthy that at the 2017 Regional Convention, where the emerging leaders of this region were presented, this group was comprised of 15 male and 13 female ministers. There is now the hope that these potential leaders will not be streamed into separate channels but will be given every opportunity to optimize their development into whatever area of ministry God is calling them. Pentecostal history has been significantly impacted by women, used by the Holy Spirit, who undertook great tasks for the kingdom. The Holy Spirit is still empowering women today, women who need to be encouraged and helped to fulfill the call of God on their lives. Psalm 68:11 declares that ‘The Lord announces the word, and the women who proclaim it are a mighty throng’ (NIV).

### **Importance of Research**

In an article published in the *White Wing Messenger* of June 1917, the executive director of Leadership Development and Discipleship in the COGOP, asked the question “Where is God Leading You?” He referenced the twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Joshua where that leader was reminding the people of God of their journey and where God had brought them from. He also made an insightful comment that “they were not delivered to stay in the wilderness, God brings his people out of somewhere in order to lead them in to somewhere else.”<sup>40</sup> Sutton also admonished that our ability to participate

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<sup>40</sup> Brian Sutton, “Where is God Leading You,” *White Wing Messenger* (June 2017): 9.

in God's mission in the world is directly tied to our ability to recognize what He is doing, receive what He is imparting and respond to His leading. These comments and insights speak directly to the issue of women in ministry who were granted the liberty to function and take their place in this end-time harvest.

The church is at a critical juncture in its history. One hundred years plus, is a short time compared to some denominations but in Pentecostalism it is full grown. Other Pentecostal denominations, the Assemblies of God (AG) for instance, which emerged in that era, have blossomed internationally with a significant footprint on the religious landscape. What is noticeable with the AG is their acknowledgement of women in ministry as early as their inaugural conference in 1914, and eventually granting full validation for pastoral ministry in 1935, in theory, but it took some years for those seeds to germinate and sprout:

What earlier scholars seem to have missed is that the AG's early affirmation of female clergy within its Constitution and Bylaws constituted a potent resource extending beyond the particular circumstances of its own era. Despite the falling statistics of later years, these provisions contained the seeds of their own renewal. When in the late 1990s women began to rediscover their ministerial call, they found an official stance that coincided with their own aspirations.<sup>41</sup>

Other Pentecostal denominations have addressed the issue differently. The Church of God (Cleveland), which has a joint history with the COGOP under Tomlinson, has moved at a much slower pace. It was only in 2000 that "the title of the second rank of licensure for COG ministers (women were accommodated to this point), changed from Licensed Minister to "Ordained Minister," (OM) in effect, granting ordination to

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<sup>41</sup> Hoover, "Thy Daughters Shall Prophesy" in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 21 (2012): 221-239.

women.”<sup>42</sup> Another gain occurred twelve years later “in 2012 when the word “male” was deleted from qualifications for state and regional boards and committees.”<sup>43</sup> The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) instituted a unique solution to their women problem.

Within the COGIC the leadership and ministry of women takes on a distinctive character that was specifically fashioned to allow them a degree of empowerment while maintaining strategic male ecclesial authority. COGIC founder Charles Harrison Mason drew on his Baptist roots to structure a “vital” yet distinctive role for women, allowing them to serve as congregational leaders while reserving the office of pastor and title of preacher for men.<sup>44</sup>

Alexander further mentions the comments of a COGIC historian who asserts that “this arrangement harnessed the spiritual fervor, mental acumen, physical energy and economic potential of its female members while maintaining male authority.”<sup>45</sup> What is noticeable also is the evidence of Barfoot and Sheppard’s theory of “Prophetic vs Priestly Religion” in which they contend that:

Women were instrumental in the founding and subsequent growth of the early Pentecostal movements, black and white. . . some important historical roots for these roles existed in earlier religious and social forces, but the uniqueness of the Pentecostal experience and theological importance of “a calling” were most responsible for the multiplicity of female roles in early Pentecostal expression.<sup>46</sup>

The COGOP has reached the point of planting the seeds, based on the expressed changes in 1996, but the process of creating the platform of full understanding and implementation is still just beginning. The local church is the seedbed of church growth and expansion; therefore it is imperative that local congregations are informed of the changes occurring at polity levels of the Church, especially when such changes can

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<sup>42</sup> Alexander and Bowers, *What Women Want*, 26.

<sup>43</sup> Alexander and Bowers, *What Women Want*, 27.

<sup>44</sup> Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 311-12.

<sup>45</sup> Alexander, *Black Fire*, 312.

<sup>46</sup> Barfoot & Sheppard, “Prophetic vs Priestly,” *Review of Religious Research* 22, no. 1 (September 1980), 2-17.

profoundly impact those with an anointing to move out into missionary or leadership ministry. Pentecostal history records many churches were started by women with a vision, anointing and burden for souls. Hans Kung stresses the pivotal importance of each congregation. “The whole Church can only be understood in terms of the local Church and its concrete actions. The local Church is not a small cell of the whole, which does not represent the whole and which has no purpose in itself. It is the real Church, to which in its own local situation everything is given and promised which it needs for the salvation of man in its own situation.”<sup>47</sup> What is interesting and exciting in the COGOP is that presently, there is an emphasis on leadership development with a focus “to touch and equip ten thousand leaders by the year 2020.”<sup>48</sup> The text of this interview given by Sutton mentions the children and youth ministries, and also the leadership training that is on-going, but what is missing in the light of this project is a statement of the potential impact of the female work-force on the membership of the church.

It is intended that this research will shine a spotlight on our local congregations, richly endowed with gifts and talents for the maturity of The Body. The urgency of the need for laborers, equipped, willing and ready for the work will force the adaptability and flexibility necessary in each context to facilitate the spread and growth of the kingdom of God. The MAR region is in a progressive transition which is the optimum time to encourage a new dynamic in the quest to increase its membership. The Regional Overseer recently announced the intent to have an accredited regional facility for the training of

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<sup>47</sup> Hans Kung, *The Church*, trans. Ray and Rosaleen Ockenden, (London: Burns & Oates, 1967), 85.

<sup>48</sup> Brian Sutton, “10,000 leaders by 2020,” *White Wing Messenger* (June 2017): 10.

emerging leaders. These are all favorable positions and augers well for women in ministry in this region.

### **Research Design**

This project will comprise of a region-wide survey of licensed female ministers in the COGOP, coupled with interviews of female pastors serving presently. Pastors in the MAR were all asked by the Regional Overseer to formulate a plan for church growth in their specific localities; consequently, it would be necessary to interview some Pastors concerning the resources needed to launch into this task. The ethnic diversity of the MAR region will necessitate adjustments in some of the presented material. The survey questions are designed to clarify understanding of how female ministers view their role in the church and what limitations they perceive or encounter in moving into a leadership role in fulfillment of the call of God. Even though there is established theory on the identification of leadership emergence in an individual, what this survey will try to uncover is the presence of a sense of destiny or call of God specifically for evangelization and church planting.

The aspect of role-models will be explored, as some women will be venturing into uncharted territories. There is a dearth of prominent female leaders in this region functioning as church leader or pastor. The pastor's wife has assumed the role of the women's leader in the local churches. The survey will delve into the need for an established mentoring program for female ministers who desire to move into church planting. The MAR is sectioned into five districts with District Overseers presiding over each. Contributions from these officers will be invaluable in determining the challenges of church growth and what resources are available to facilitate their missionary activities. The recognition and utilization of female ministers in church planting will be the

underlining focus of these interviews. It is hoped that any apprehensions or presuppositions could be discussed in these encounters, as the common goal is to activate growth in the COGOP in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

The methodology to be used should reveal key elements in the theological and cultural framework which underpins set doctrines and practices in the COGOP regarding women in pastoral ministry. The views and understanding of the regional and district leaders should help in formulating a strategy for change, along with those women already functioning as pastors, who could assist greatly with identifying the nuances of the position. The above-mentioned interviews are crucial in understanding and confronting the fundamental issues, and offer a potential platform to launch systemic change in the following four areas of church life:

(1) Increased awareness of the God-given resources in the church, local and corporate:

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.<sup>4</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.<sup>5</sup> For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;<sup>6</sup> and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;<sup>7</sup> and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.<sup>8</sup> For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Pet 1:3-8)

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.<sup>4</sup> For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,<sup>5</sup> so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Rom 12:3-5)

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.<sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.<sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.<sup>8</sup> To one



there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,<sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,<sup>10</sup> to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.<sup>11</sup> All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. (1 Cor 12:4-11)

(2) Begin to identify and mentor those identified for leadership, male and female, at the local church level, and institute designated funding for relevant training. Within the current push for ten thousand leaders by the year 2020, women should be adequately represented in all areas and levels of training.

(3) Policy and positions taken in respect to female leaders must be backed by good hermeneutics, so that the local church is informed to minimize opposition. Affirmation by those in authority and the community of faith is essential to the emerging leader.

(4) From the corporate level, there should be a clear unambiguous statement or ruling on the subject, clarifying all aspects of women in leadership, particularly pastoral ministry.

### **Implications and Outcomes**

The intended outcome of this project would be the implementation of the following changes in relation to the leadership of women in the Churches in the MAR.

1. The formulation of a program in local churches targeted to female ministers which should result in the maximization of their ministry potential.
2. This will involve deliberate acknowledgement coupled with teaching to establish the value and theological foundation of female leadership.
3. The aspect of role-models will be considered since some women ministers will be moving from significant under-representation in the hierarchy of the

Church into some prominence. The input from strong, positive women leaders should be encouraged.

4. Increase in the appointment of women as pastors in the MAR region of the Church of God of Prophecy.

These reforms constitute a paradigm shift at the local church level, as the very culture of the organization will be affected. The results of this project should contribute in a small way to the bigger program of the COGOP in its endeavors to participate in the end-time harvest. The Scripture mentions that the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few, so pray to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers. It is hoped that this project will awaken the church to the presence of what the Lord has already provided. “The Lord announces the word, and the women who proclaim it are a mighty throng” (Psalm 68:11).

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Overview

This chapter will focus on the journey of women in the Christian tradition through a literary review, covering various but successive periods in church history. This journey adds color, substance and clarity to many of the issues facing women in the Pentecostal tradition whose roots run deep, into the culture and traditions of their predecessors. Even before the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit in any context, there already existed a culture into which this new experience must assimilate. The presence of women in church should be nothing special or remarkable, yet they generate much debate especially in the area of seeking to answer God's call through ministry. This chapter will highlight the fact that in spite of limitations and obstacles, women in every era of Christianity have been able to serve, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Authors such as Husbands & Larsen, Spencer and Ferguson begin their arguments 'in the beginning', seeking to emphasize God's purpose in the creation of woman. There are also those whose central theme surrounds the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Both of which opened a new way for the Jew, the Gentile and those of every race, class and gender.

There are six epochs presented in this chapter, and in each, the contributions of godly women are evaluated in the light of prevailing challenges. The first period looks in to the Old Testament and the influences of Jewish culture on the welfare of women. The second examines Jesus' encounters and teachings regarding women. The third section continues in the New Testament with reference to Paul and his admonitions for the ordering of the church. The fourth section seeks to examine the beliefs and philosophy of

some Church Fathers whose far-reaching influence is felt even today, also the adoption of a feminine deity in Roman Catholicism. The fifth section brings us to the Reformation, which gave rise to an explosion of religious energy, birthing new sects, offering new scope and freedoms for women. The final section looks at Classical Pentecostalism with its promise, purpose and praxis in North America. It is remarkable to recognize threads that weave through the tapestry of time with each period forming links, clasps or hooks reaching into a new era.

### **Imago Dei**

The creation narratives provide the foundation for numerous dogmas and doctrines regarding God's intent when he made humankind. "Although there is a great deal of theological speculation about what creation in God's image means, Genesis 1 unmistakably affirms that male and female equally share it."<sup>1</sup> This view by Linda Belleville is also shared by Aida Spencer who further contends that "in order to understand God's nature, males and females together are needed to reflect God's image. The image of God is a double image."<sup>2</sup> This concept is fundamental to the debate on equal status for women based on their creation. There are detractors who contend that "discrimination against women is a grievous sin and a dishonor to God in whose image women are created. Yet in our zeal to right the wrongs committed against women, we must not forget that God designed male-female distinctions . . . to exercise different functions in society."<sup>3</sup> Strauch acknowledges "full equality of men and women in

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<sup>1</sup> Linda L. Belleville, "Women in Ministry: An Egalitarian Perspective," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, Stanley R. Gundry and James R. Beck ed., Counterpoints (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2009, 2005), L 272, Kindle.

<sup>2</sup> Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2010), 21.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, rev. and expanded. edition (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1995), L 710, Kindle.

personhood, dignity and value, but distinct in gender roles.”<sup>4</sup> Belleville assumes that the creation accounts attributes to both male and female, the ability to rule because God’s image reside in both. She further explains, based on her parsing of the Hebrew text, that Gen 2:18-20 speaks of “a help (*ezer*) corresponding to him (*kenegdo*).”<sup>5</sup> Spencer expands on this interpretation to include “equal and adequate to himself.”<sup>6</sup> These writers and others such as Husbands & Larsen all agree that traditional “roles” were not assigned by God whose commission speaks of sharing tasks and responsibility, and also there is no sense of inferiority on the woman’s part as the language does not project that. The penalty for their transgression introduces the mention of “rule” but pertains to the married relationship, not a general ruling placing every woman under the authority of every man.

In the opposite camp, Kevin Giles delves into the theology of Knight and Grudem regarding eternal submission and subordination of the Son to the Father and likewise of women to men. “In conservative evangelical and PC circles at the present time possibly the most often heard argument for women’s permanent subordination and therefore principled exclusion from leadership in church is that the subordination of God the Son to God the Father demands this.”<sup>7</sup> Giles goes on to elucidate the usage of “role” and “function”, two words critical to the debate,

In this everyday usage it is understood that roles and functions can change and do change. They are not fixed and person defining. However, in the novel usage invented by Dr. Knight, popularized by Wayne Grudem, and now entrenched in the evangelical world, a “role” is given an entirely different meaning found in no dictionary or sociological text. A “role” has nothing to do with routine behavior.

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<sup>4</sup> Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, L 710, Kindle.

<sup>5</sup> Linda L. Belleville, *Women in Ministry*, L 310, Kindle.

<sup>6</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Kevin Giles, “The Trinity Argument,” in *Raising Women Leaders: Perspectives on Liberating Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Contexts*, Shane Clifton and Jacqueline Grey ed. (Chester Hill, NSW: Australasian Pentecostal Studies, 2009), L 124, Kindle.

It is a person defining category, speaking in fact of *power relations* not *role relations*.<sup>8</sup>

The impact of this theology is wide-spread even in Pentecostal circles. “Grudem’s Systematic Theology . . . is one of the most widely used theological texts in Bible Colleges and evangelical and Pentecostal seminaries around the world.”<sup>9</sup> A summary of this argument is as follows:

“difference in role” speaks of an essential and unchangeable difference in persons which is predicated on the premise that some are born to rule and some to obey. The rulers and the ruled are not social equals and never can be. So what Knight and his followers are actually arguing is that women are only equal in a spiritual sense, not in a substantive way. They are the subordinate sex and this can never change.<sup>10</sup>

The authors report that other evangelicals such as Dr. Bruce Ware, author of *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*, have embraced this theology. “He argues that the eternal subordination of the Son in authority to the Father is the primary theological ground for the permanent subordination of women.”<sup>11</sup> The permanence with which these theologians speak has placed women in an unredeemable state, coupled with the fact that their set position is rooted in the Godhead itself. This dogma confuses the purpose of God the Father sending Jesus the Son into the world. Men and women needed redemption.

With reference to God’s covenant line as He sought to establish His people, Spencer points out “at every major link in the line, the wife is as important as the husband.”<sup>12</sup> It had to be Sarai and not Hagar. The position of women in Israel transitioned even as that nation struggled with God’s requirements under the Law. Pierce in his

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<sup>8</sup> Giles, “The Trinity Argument,” in *Raising Women Leaders*, 125.

<sup>9</sup> Giles, “The Trinity Argument,” in *Raising Women Leaders*, 126.

<sup>10</sup> Giles, “The Trinity Argument,” in *Raising Women Leaders*, 125.

<sup>11</sup> Giles, “The Trinity Argument,” in *Raising Women Leaders*, 126.

<sup>12</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 41.

comment on the welfare of women under the law states “because the law of Moses reflects a male-centered social environment . . . Women are normally subject to the authority of a father, husband or brother except when widowed or divorced.”<sup>13</sup> Generally women were of low estate but Pierce does observe some protections in the intent of the Torah, as “the family laws had a relatively progressive and protective attitude toward the legal status of women, exhibiting concern for limiting male dominance. . . . It meant the difference between an ordered society and a chaotic anarchy with un-restrained male dominance.”<sup>14</sup>

In spite of these odds and obstacles, there are women of exceptional achievement in this social climate. In the effort to determine fairness or repression there needs to be some understanding of the cultural framework in which women functioned in those days including the governmental framework or social organization of the community. “This structure was not static in the ‘Bible’ but developed from a nomadic family group to an institutional monarchy in the Old Testament, to a multi-cultural nexus in the New Testament.”<sup>15</sup>

One individual who projects an exemplary profile is Deborah, mentioned in Idestrom’s essay as someone who combined the role of judge, prophet, leader, and poet,

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<sup>13</sup> Ronald W. Pierce, “From Old Testament Law to New Testament Gospel.” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd edition, Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 96.

<sup>14</sup> Ronald Pierce, “Old Testament Law to New Testament Gospel.” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 105.

<sup>15</sup> Jacqueline Grey, “Models of Women’s Leadership in the Bible,” in *Raising Women Leaders*, Shane Clifton and Jacqueline Grey ed. (Chester Hill, NSW: Australasian Pentecostal Studies, 2009), L 62, Kindle.

“there is no doubt that she is the greatest figure in the book.”<sup>16</sup> Deborah arises as a woman chosen by God to lead His people in a time of crisis.

There are several things that make Deborah stand out from the rest of the judges. First of all, she is the only woman who judges Israel. In a list of leaders where only men are mentioned she stands out in terms of gender. Yet nothing within the biblical record indicates that this was a problem. In fact, Deborah is described as a well-respected authority within the Israelite community. Ailish Ferguson Eves writes, “The text takes Deborah’s status and responsibility in Israel for granted. She is not introduced as an emergency substitute for the men who had failed to come forward (as some would interpret Judg 4:4; cf. Judg 5:6-7). Her standing in society is a secure and accepted one as a prophet through whom God speaks.”<sup>17</sup>

There are other women of note in the Old Testament fulfilling the role of Prophetesses, many of them nameless, but “Huldah’s role in Josiah’s reforms may have helped elevate all the true prophets to their rightful place in Judah’s religious community.”<sup>18</sup> In the Old Testament, there are not many female prophets of note but for those worthy of mention, nothing was said apologizing for their gender. Clifton & Grey sees the rise of the monarchy in the nation of Israel, and the priesthood, as leaving no avenues open to women for national leadership, except as a prophet. Huldah filled this role faithfully.

Active during the ministries of Jeremiah and Zephaniah, it was to this prophet Huldah that the young king Josiah looked for guidance and advice. This advice was necessitated by the ‘discovery’ of the Book of the Law in the Temple precinct (2 Kings 22). Huldah was sought by five of the national leaders (including the High Priest) for guidance in the process of instituting the contents of the law.<sup>19</sup>

These women represented and spoke with God’s authority to the nation and their ministry was accepted as authentic. The authors describe her as a woman gifted by the Spirit to

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<sup>16</sup> Rebecca G. S. Idestrom, “Deborah: A Role Model for Christian Public Ministry,” in *Women, Ministry and the Gospel: Exploring New Paradigms*, Mark Husbands and Timothy Larsen ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 17.

<sup>17</sup> Idestrom, “Deborah,” in *Women, Ministry and the Gospel*, 21- 22.

<sup>18</sup> Linda L. Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd edition, Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 113.

<sup>19</sup> Grey, “Models of Women’s Leadership in the Bible,” in *Raising Women Leaders*, L 69.



perform a public ministry, who broke from cultural expectations and limitations for the benefit of the community. This very pattern is repeated in the lives of women in later eras of Christianity whose ministry was Spirit empowered and effective in accomplishing the task.

### **Women in the Gospels**

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus outlines his mission with a partial quote from the book of Isaiah.

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. (Isa 61:1-3)

The above words embody the hope and expectancy of several categories of people as the good news of the new community embodied in “the Kingdom of God”, was lived and taught through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. One writer comments “Discipleship in the New Testament breaks down barriers of gender, class, race, and culture; and so, women, while rarely called “disciples,” are described as those who follow and serve Jesus.”<sup>20</sup> This is the ideal, but the reality of first-century Jewish thought and practice “was part of an Eastern culture where women participated little in public life. The woman who did take an active part in public life was in danger of a charge of promiscuity.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Barbara J. MacHaffie, *Her Story: Women in Christian Tradition*, 2nd edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 5.

<sup>21</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 52-53.

Despite the foregoing, many women followed Jesus and served him and his disciples. Jesus' encounters with women as recorded in the Gospels were numerous and varied in content. He used women extensively in his analogies and life lessons to the crowds who heard him. In every encounter the woman was treated with dignity and respect as in John 8:1-11 with the woman caught in adultery, and Luke 7:36-50 with the sinful woman who washed his feet. Some of Jesus' teachings using women are mentioned by Schreiner:

1. Likened the kingdom of heaven to leaven which was put in dough by a woman. (Matt 13:33)
2. Told the parable of the ten virgins (Matt: 25:1-13) and defended his ministry to sinners with the parable of the lost coin of a woman. (Luke 15:8-10)
3. The necessity of steadfastness in prayer is illustrated by the widow who confronted the unjust judge. (Luke 18:1-8)
4. Jesus upheld the dignity of women by speaking out against divorce, which particularly injured women in the ancient world. (Mark 10:2-12)
5. Nor are women simply sex objects to be desired by men, for Jesus spoke strongly against lust. (Matt 5:27-30)
6. Jesus also commended the poor widow who gave all she owned—more than the rich who gave lavish gifts out of their abundance. (Luke 21:1-4)<sup>22</sup>

Yes, the disciples chosen by Jesus were all male, a fact Strauch emphasizes in his arguments for male leadership. "During His earthly ministry, Jesus personally trained and appointed twelve men whom he called "apostles" (Luke 6:13). Jesus' choice of male leadership was an affirmation of the creation order as presented in Genesis 2:18-25."<sup>23</sup> Strauch also contends that "if Jesus intended to abolish all male-female role differences through His work of redemption, the choosing of the Twelve was the crucial moment in

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, "Women in Ministry: Another Complementarian Perspective," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, Stanley R. Gundry and James R. Beck ed. Counterpoints (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2009, 2005), L 5220-5236, Kindle.

<sup>23</sup> Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, L 740, Kindle.

history to act and appoint women to the apostolate.”<sup>24</sup> There is also the criticism of Strauch’s view, countering that “Jesus was merely accommodating to His culture.”<sup>25</sup>

MacHaffie offers some additional background to the early church context. “In the first century, Judaism—so central to the development of Christianity—also reveals diverse perspectives on women and a wide range of practices. . . many rabbis regarded women as socially and religiously inferior to men, and some even expressed contempt for them.”<sup>26</sup> There were also some who favored the teaching of women. But these were in the minority.

There were several incidents where Jesus did contravene cultural norms regarding women as recorded in the Gospels. The narrative of Mary and Martha in the Gospel of Luke sends a clear message of Jesus’ position on religious instruction of women. Bearing in mind that the woman’s domain was the home, He did not reprimand Mary for choosing to sit and learn instead of doing the household chores. “Consequently, Luke is indirectly telling his readers that Mary was taking a position typical of a rabbinic pupil, a position unusual for a woman and moreover usually disapproved.”<sup>27</sup> MacHaffie also spoke into this pericope with a further insight on Jesus’ agenda. “In his teachings and his actions, Jesus turns established social structures upside down: the kingdom of God values service, humility, and faith rather than political and religious power . . . It is within this context that Jesus challenges the gender rules of his culture.”<sup>28</sup> Blomberg however disagrees, as

despite all these remarkable “advances” over his culture, Jesus never promotes full-fledged egalitarianism . . . The gospels unequivocally depict Jesus as an authority figure instructing others on how to live. He has an inner core of his three

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<sup>24</sup> Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, L 740.

<sup>25</sup> Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, L 740.

<sup>26</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 58.

<sup>28</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 5.

closest followers (Peter, James, and John—Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33), who in turn form part of the twelve “apostles”—the next circle of leadership moving outward from Jesus himself. Then come a larger group of followers, which grows and shrinks depending on the circumstances, who can be called “disciples.” Only among this group do women appear.<sup>29</sup>

The gospels record his public encounters with a hemorrhaging woman, representative of ritual impurity, and a Samaritan woman representing a scorned people in religious impurity. Jesus’ declared mission in the gospel of John was to set the captives free and relieve the suffering of the bruised. Women of his day fall into this category needing his deliverance.

Luke’s gospel portrays women in various roles in Jesus’ ministry on earth. They are an integral part of the new community formed around Jesus. “Luke focuses on the reception of the gospel message by outcasts: the poor, sinners and tax collectors. In addition, women come in for special treatment.”<sup>30</sup> Green and McKnight also comment on the responsiveness and sensibility to Jesus’ message by the women. “Though on the fringes of first-century society, they are in the middle of Luke’s story.”<sup>31</sup> The authors conclude that the good news is available to all, but society’s weak and vulnerable are often most suited to respond to its message of hope and reliance on God.

### **Church of Every Nation**

The Day of Pentecost in the Book of Acts presented a paradigm shift in the understanding of the disciples, regarding the missionary challenge ahead. Acts chapter ten recounts Peter’s teaching-moment in-which The Lord scolds him, “Do not call

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<sup>29</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, “Women in Ministry: A Complementarian Perspective,” in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, Stanley R. Gundry and James R. Beck ed., Counterpoints (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2009, 2005), L 2659, Kindle.

<sup>30</sup> D. L. Bock, “Luke, Gospel of,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, The IVP Bible Dictionary Series, vol. 6, Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall, ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 506.

<sup>31</sup> Bock, “Luke, Gospel of,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 506.

anything impure that God has made clean.” Later in relating the incident to Cornelius he says God had shown him that he should not call anyone impure or unclean, but the lesson of it all in Peter’s words, “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right” (Acts 10:34-35). This grace that encompasses every nation, tongue, tribe, Jew or Gentile, somehow, as argued by some theologians, seem to exclude women.

The apostle Paul set in order the various congregations in different regions as the Gospel of Jesus Christ spread throughout the then world. His letters to some churches include corrective instructions addressed to both men and women in the church. Now using those Scriptures, some theologians, centuries later, have sought to “silence” the ministry of women in churches.

Everett Ferguson in his book *Women In The Church* offers an interesting thought after reviewing the activity of women in the early church, including during the ministry of the apostle Paul, and this statement somewhat expresses the theme of this thesis. “Christians must confess that churches have not always utilized women as fully as these passages indicate they were involved in apostolic days. In reflecting cultural norms of the past the church through history has sometimes not only failed to put women to work fully but has even allowed their repression.”<sup>32</sup> In his 1996 publication *The Church of Christ* his explanation of the praying and prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11:5, of which women were participants, that such occurrences were probably in a group setting but not in the assembly. His conclusion on this aspect of women in the church are as follows:

The distinctive positions of male and female were not based on the culture but what God instituted at creation; culture dictated how those distinctions were

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<sup>32</sup> Everett Ferguson, *Women in the Church: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, 2nd edition, (Abilene, TX: Desert Willow Publishing, 2015), L 151, Kindle.

expressed in the given society. Thus 1 Corinthians 14:34 supports the subordinate position of women . . . The prohibition of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35, as reflecting relations established at creation, was not a local requirement because of disturbances at Corinth but was in accord with practice “in all the churches of the saints.”<sup>33</sup>

Concerning the roles of teaching and leading in the church, Ferguson and Strauch agree that “First Timothy 2:11-14 should alone settle the question of women elders. Paul prohibits women from doing two things in reference to the men of the church: (1) teaching and (2) exercising authority over them.”<sup>34</sup> “The prohibition on women speaking is stated absolutely. If Paul only wanted to regulate abuses, he could have done so and stated the conditions under which women were to speak and the conditions under which they were not.”<sup>35</sup>

At this point it seems that the barriers Jesus had dismantled were being rebuilt, comments Spencer who gives the following summation:

The body of Christ, God’s sanctuary, is God’s people. However, after the third century, Christians began constructing buildings in imitation of that old marble temple. The sanctuary or “holy of holies” became the pulpit set on a porch above the people. No longer were women or lay people allowed to enter that “holy of holies” and there hear and speak God’s message. The raised place became reserved again for certain purified males. The priesthood of all believers became the priesthood of males again. The good news for all became the good news for the powerful and the rich. The good news for the women became the good news for the men . . . However, no matter how extensively people try to pour cement into that former foundation, the living temple will grow up and crack the imitation!<sup>36</sup>

Contrasting views are expressed by some others, questioning why would Paul have restricted questions coming specifically from women? but then why does Paul permit the women to pray and prophesy in 1 Corinthians 11:5? Spencer comments that

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<sup>33</sup> Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1996), 342-343.

<sup>34</sup> Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, L 850, Kindle.

<sup>35</sup> Ferguson, *Women in the Church*, L 290, Kindle.

<sup>36</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 63.

“when Paul commands that women learn in silence he is commanding them to be students who respect and affirm their teacher’s convictions. “In all submission” is a synonym for silence here.”<sup>37</sup> Pierce and Groothuis expands further on the scripture under consideration:

Because women’s public speech was sometimes shameful in Corinth, one cannot simply assume that Paul’s claim that it is “shameful” for a woman to speak in the assembly (1 Cor 14:35) is meant to be transcultural, any more than his earlier injunction to cover their heads (related to shame in 1 Cor 11:5-6) . . . Paul also has reason to be concerned for the church’s reputation in the larger society (1 Cor 6:6; 14:23), . . . It seems likely that in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 he supports the cultural expectation of honorable matron’s verbal self-restraint.<sup>38</sup>

The comments of Husbands and Larsen adequately sums up this question of women’s silence in the assembly:

People today in the Western world do not find any impropriety in women taking part in secular life, in contributing to Christian meetings, in writing Christian books (whether novels, devotional books, commentaries on Scripture or doctrinal disquisitions) or composing Christian hymns. In so doing they undoubtedly teach men! The casuistry that has to be resorted to in order to make the prohibition workable is a clear demonstration that the principle cannot be consistently maintained. How can it be right for complementarians to read and cite books on Bible and theology written by women and disallow them from saying the same things in a church meeting?<sup>39</sup>

The consensus seems to be pointing to the married woman’s behavior in public. This is understandable because of the Greco-Roman culture, and the need for the church to present an acceptable face to those observing this new religion.

Acts chapter 2 records a gender-neutral event in the upper room where the Holy Spirit was poured out on those assembled, inclusive of Jews, Gentiles, slaves, men and

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<sup>37</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 77.

<sup>38</sup> Craig S. Keener, “Learning in the Assemblies: 1 Corinthians 14:34-35,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd edition, Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 167-168.

<sup>39</sup> I. Howard Marshall, “Women in Ministry: A Further Look at 1 Timothy 2,” in *Women, Ministry and the Gospel: Exploring New Paradigms*, Mark Husbands and Timothy Larsen, ed. (Downers Grove, IL.: IVP Academic, 2007), 63.

women. The Apostles understood the event as the promise of the Father, which Jesus spoke about, and was needed for the task ahead. Jesus' imminent return was the engine that drove the missionary fervency of the early apostolic churches in which women were remarkably active as mentioned by Ferguson in his comment earlier. However, things began to change as Christians realized the parousia will take a while, and there is consequently need for a sustaining stay and structure for the church. "As the church grew and became more structured, it gradually underwent a process of 'patriarchalization' in which women were excluded from positions of leadership and authority."<sup>40</sup> Besides the internal constructs being erected in the church, there were the cultural challenges of the Greco-Roman world into which Christians found themselves. "It was a culture dominated by an honor/shame ideology in which virtuous men pursued honor and success in the public sphere while virtuous women protected their 'shame' or chastity by being discreet, subordinate, and secluded."<sup>41</sup> Other contributing considerations include the suspicion and hostility directed at Christians, who in turn "wished to draw as little attention to themselves as possible . . . They adopted and even surpassed traditional cultural views on appropriate behavior for women and in so doing began to stifle female leadership in the churches."<sup>42</sup>

### **Mothers and Fathers**

Following the era of the Apostles, the Church Fathers assumed the leadership and guidance of this relatively new religion, Christianity. Various questions and controversies arose and were addressed with a view of keeping the purity of the faith. For women

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<sup>40</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 14.

<sup>41</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 15.

<sup>42</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 16.



seeking to find a place in Christianity and yearning for a “higher life”, in the fourth century, asceticism proved a welcoming option. There is a negative side to this lifestyle but for the women embracing it, there was a liberating aspect. “In its rejection of marriage and motherhood as the Christian norm, asceticism paradoxically suggested that women might now be liberated from their definition by these roles. . . Christ, founder of the new virginal humanity, has made them equals to men in the eschatological humanity that transcended this historical condition.”<sup>43</sup> The authors expressed some of the liberating features of this lifestyle as being in charge of one’s own affairs, and a rejection of the control of others. The medieval perception of holiness enabled these women to project spiritual power.

Medieval people wrote of their encounter with the holy in varieties of symbols reflecting a broader range of human experience than is the case within the mainstream of Christian expression today. Their language of prayer was less androcentric, more balanced between “male” and “female” metaphor and symbol for God and the holy, than in the case in the West since the seventeenth century. The realm of the holy in medieval spirituality was populated with female figures: the saints; the Queen of Saints, Mary; and even God himself was “as really our Mother as He is our Father.”<sup>44</sup>

“Yet while they were admired and celebrated, even ascetic women were feared; the solution eventually was to require that they be strictly cloistered behind convent walls.”<sup>45</sup>

This rise in female spirituality and acceptance in Christianity in medieval times is a remarkable turnaround coming in the times of the “Church Fathers” whose attitudes towards women was less than complementary. “Attitudes toward women in the Christian

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<sup>43</sup> Rosemary Ruether, “Mothers of the Church: Ascetic Women in the Late Patristic Age,” in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 72.

<sup>44</sup> Eleanor McLaughlin, “Women, Power and the Pursuit of Holiness in Medieval Christianity,” in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin ed., (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 124-125.

<sup>45</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 25.

tradition even in the twenty-first century have been shaped in no small way by a number of theological writers who lived in the first six centuries of Christian history.”<sup>46</sup>

Clement of Alexandria was a teacher, Jerome was a biblical scholar and secretary to Pope Damasus 1, and Augustine was bishop of the North African city of Hippo. . . The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus was central to their work, but the church fathers had to convey and explain the message of the Gospel in terms that would be compatible with the thought patterns of the Greco-Roman world. There was a strong tendency in this culture to divide reality into two opposing or contradictory spheres, the sphere of mind and spirit and the sphere of the body, or flesh. The mind and spirit were identified with that which was good or virtuous while the flesh was represented as that which had to be overcome or conquered. Sometimes this line of thought condemned the body and the material world as hopelessly evil and corrupt and it deeply influenced the growth of the ascetic spirit within the churches. . . This dualistic approach to the world, as it was called, had an influence on the way in which women were regarded. Women were identified traditionally with the body while the mind was seen as essentially masculine. The result was an association of the female with the flesh, the material world, and the drive to satisfy physical desires and, therefore, with that which was evil.<sup>47</sup>

MacHaffie mentions some of the major ideas regarding women that emerged from the writings and teaching of the “Church Fathers”: (1) The exceptional and highly regarded state of the virgin life. Augustine claimed that the virgin possessed the most important “charisma” or gift from the Holy Spirit and it was the one channel in the Christian community through which women could acquire some measure of practical equality with men, and some kind of official standing within the church. (2) Women are responsible for sin in the world based on the Genesis account, and women being a continuing source of sin. (3) As a potential source of sin and danger to the spiritual well-being of the community, women were therefore to be kept subordinate in church and society which some Fathers regarded as the penalty for Eve’s transgression. (4) Augustine taught that woman was created as inferior to man. He argued that woman was

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<sup>46</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 22.

<sup>47</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 22.

created with a mind and spirit that were weak and readily overcome by strong physical passion. Even in the Garden of Eden therefore the male was to rule, govern and teach.<sup>48</sup>

Thomas Aquinas, a thirteenth century theologian not only repeated the ideas of the earlier church fathers but went further to explain the biological science which produced woman as a “misbegotten human.”<sup>49</sup>

One would ask how does the veneration of Mary fit into this picture of dark colors and thick strokes where women are concerned? The church made an effort to quell controversy surrounding the nature of the Lord Jesus stirred up by Nestorius who claimed that Jesus possessed two natures and the child born to Mary was not divine. This teaching was condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431 but in order to establish the “very God and very Man” of Jesus, the status of Mary was elevated to the title *Mother of God*. “The object of the Council and of the Anti-Nestorians was in no sense to add honor to the Mother, but to maintain the true doctrine with respect to the Son.”<sup>50</sup> Also, the perpetual virginity of Mary was critical to uphold the sanctity of her divine offspring. “the virgin life became an important source of female power and male approval. In medieval Christianity, the “good woman” was a virgin while all other women were associated by nature with the powers of darkness.”<sup>51</sup> The true purpose of granting a title to Mary was soon lost and her veneration began to spread within the Church prompting some scholars to label it *Mariolatry*. “The increase of devotion to Mary was encouraged

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<sup>48</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 23-25.

<sup>49</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 49-50.

<sup>50</sup> John McClintock and James Strong, “Mariolatry,” in *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vols. 1-12. Biblesoft Inc., 2000.

<sup>51</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 31.

by successive Popes and in 1854 Pope Pius IX formally declared the immaculate conception to be a dogma of the Church.”<sup>52</sup>

In view of the rise of Mariology within the Church, was there a significant change in the status of women? MacHaffie comments, “Scholars also observe that although Mary was a woman, the circumstances of her life could not be duplicated by ordinary women.”<sup>53</sup> History records that during this period, the rise and rule of the Bishops was cemented, and women in the Church through succeeding centuries sought other means of living and serving God at a higher level in the cloistered or ascetic life. One such remarkable woman was Elena Guerra (1835-1914).

Italian Roman Catholic nun and precursor to the Catholic Charismatic Movement. Founder of the Oblate Sisters of the Holy Spirit in Lucca, Italy, Sr. Elena Guerra wrote twelve confidential letters to Pope Leo XIII requesting a renewed preaching on the Holy Spirit. She urged that the faithful rediscover life lived according to the Holy Spirit and that the Church be renewed, together with society and the very “face of the earth.” She insisted that “Pentecost is not over. . . . It is going on in every time and in every place, because the Holy Spirit desired to give himself to all men and all who want Him can always receive Him.”<sup>54</sup>

What Elena Guerra and other devout women have shown is that in every time, place and season, there are women and men, mightily used by God to accomplish specific tasks for His Church. Because of her obedience to the Holy Spirit there is to this day, in the Roman Catholic Church, nine days of prayer “to the Holy Spirit, for the renewal of Christianity.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, revised edition (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1999, 1975), 1088.

<sup>53</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 64.

<sup>54</sup> R. V. Burgess, “Guerra, Elena,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, revised and expanded edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 2002), 682.

<sup>55</sup> R. V. Burgess, “Guerra, Elena,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 682.

Another holy woman or “mystic” as she was called was Hildegard (1098-1179). She was revered in her time, and as S. M. Burgess in his article mentions, her testifying to being guided by a Divine Light. Her message was unique for her time.

One of the greatest Christian mystics, Hildegard founded (1136) a convent near Bingen, which became the center for the Hildegardian revival. She had visions from age 5 onward but did not divulge them until she was 42, when she experienced a calling to proclaim God’s words in the Spirit . . . Hildegard was taken seriously as a prophet by everyone, from the popes to the humblest serfs. She wrote so many prominent people (300 letters still exist), never mincing words when she considered their behavior unworthy of their calling. She went on numerous preaching missions, delivering fiery apocalyptic sermons—an exceptional role for a woman in those days.<sup>56</sup>

Closer to our time is the ministry of Mother Theresa (1910-1997) whose “call within a call” explains the reality of women breaking new ground in that denomination.

### **Reformed**

The new era of reformation brought some light after a dark period for women in the Church. The new sects that emerged offered varying levels of accommodation to the activity of female members. Luther and Calvin were the leading theologians among the reformers. The status of women outside the home was remarkably affected by declarations such as: “All Christians, it was said, must learn to read the Bible as the authoritative guide to faith and practice. Luther therefore called upon the civil authorities in Germany to establish schools for young girls and boys.”<sup>57</sup> Even though it was not their intent to set women free of all restrictions, the following is attributed to Calvin’s initiative:

Calvin argued that, unlike doctrine, matters of human governance such as church polity and forms of worship could change according to the expectations of a particular culture. The church had to be sensitive to what is regarded as “proper”

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<sup>56</sup> S. M. Burgess, “Hildegard of Bingen,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, revised and expanded edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 2002), 713.

<sup>57</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 94.

and “decorous” in certain circumstances. Calvin included the silence of women in church as a matter of human governance. It is not clear whether Calvin believed that the subordination of woman must endure as long as creation endures.<sup>58</sup>

For some folks, Luther did not go far enough with his reforms, so splinters occurred ushering in groups like the Anabaptists whose goal was “the restitution of apostolic Christianity, a return to churches of true believers. . . In the early churches, they said, men and women who had experienced personal spiritual regeneration were the only fit subjects for baptism.”<sup>59</sup> The English version of Protestantism gave rise to the Puritans who demanded the simplification of doctrine and worship, and greater strictness in religious discipline. These Puritans and later The Quakers offered women greater latitude for public expression. These are the groups that built the platform for several notable women to emerge.

Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) is an example of the women who “throughout Christian history women have readily found opportunities to serve in the developing stages of religious movements but then have faced opposition as these groups moved into the mainstream of institutionalized Christianity.”<sup>60</sup> Her fervency was needed at first in the Bay Colony but later, unappreciated once frontier conditions gave way to respectability in the church community. Women gravitated to her as a teacher of the Scripture, often challenging the status quo of the Sunday sermon. She was gaining a large following among both men and women but “her exposition of Scripture seriously challenged the

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<sup>58</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 95.

<sup>59</sup> Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 3rd edition (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 249.

<sup>60</sup> Ruth A. Tucker, “The Changing Roles of Women in Ministry: The Early Church Through the 18<sup>th</sup> Century,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd edition, Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 35.

theological framework of Puritan preaching, and this was intolerable.”<sup>61</sup> For this she was banished from the Bay Colony.

The prominence of women in the Quaker movement is well documented. One such woman was Margaret Fell Fox (1614-1702).

Margaret Fell Fox served as a role model and an outspoken advocate of equality for women in society and among the Quakers. She did not mince words in challenging the male establishment. In her booklet *Women’s Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed of by the Scriptures* she wrote: “But all this opposing of women’s speaking, hath arisen out of the bottomless pit.”<sup>62</sup>

Like the Quakers, the early Methodists were trail blazers and consequently labelled an extremist group. Susanna Wesley stands out among this group. Being the mother of John and Charles, leaders in the Methodist movement, she is credited with heavily influencing them in the Christian path. “She was far more a pragmatist than any sort of modern-day feminist—as were her sons. Their agenda was not equal rights for women but the preaching of the gospel, and women’s voices were needed as much as were men’s.”<sup>63</sup>

The discomfort of accommodating women preachers over the centuries has been a constant irritant to churchmen. John Wesley “was convinced that the apostle Paul did not permit women to preach under ordinary circumstances. But he was also convinced that “the whole world of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation” and thus did “not fall under the ordinary rules of discipline.”<sup>64</sup>

MacHaffie sums up this era in the ministry of Protestant women as “these women discovered possibilities beyond the roles they were assigned traditionally. They

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<sup>61</sup> Tucker, “The Changing Roles of Women in Ministry,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 35-36.

<sup>62</sup> Tucker, “The Changing Roles of Women in Ministry,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 36-37.

<sup>63</sup> Tucker, “The Changing Roles of Women in Ministry,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 37.

<sup>64</sup> Tucker, “The Changing Roles of Women in Ministry,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 35.

developed their speaking and writing skills, they found adventure and intellectual stimulation, and they experienced contentment in responding to what they regarded as a divine mandate.”<sup>65</sup> The question is asked of early movements such as the Anabaptists and Quakers, “Why is that? How could a people so intent upon restoring New Testament Christianity come to be so far ahead of their time? Like the Benedictine monks of an earlier day, the Anabaptists demonstrate that those who live most devoutly for the world to come are often in the best position to change the present.”<sup>66</sup>

### **Women in Pentecostalism**

The legacy of the Puritans and Quakers extended to the Holiness movements in the early 1900s. These movements formed ready soil for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. One perspective records the transition as follows:

Interestingly, Pentecostalism began as a paradigm shift from an exclusive focus on holiness to an outward thrust that involved a dynamic filling and an empowerment for global witness. Under the influence of the revivals that occurred in Keswick, England, Pentecostals viewed holiness not as an end in itself, but as a preparation for empowered global witness. . . The paradigm shift from holiness/righteousness to empowerment/tongues did not involve the abandonment of the former.<sup>67</sup>

In the early period of the movement, women were active in all spheres of ministry as significant recognition was given to the empowerment of the Holy Spirit on whoever He chooses to use. The movement at this point was indeed “spirit driven”. This was the essence of the defense presented by Pentecostals against being accused of unscriptural practices in using women in the ministry of the word, arguments were centered on “biblical passages like Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:16-17 and the resurrection accounts in

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<sup>65</sup> MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 105.

<sup>66</sup> Shelley, *Church History*, 248.

<sup>67</sup> Frank D. Macchia, “The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen ed. (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books Intl., 1999), 16.



Matthew and John. Christ commanded women to go and bear witness to his resurrection and the Holy Spirit empowered them to bear this witness on the day of Pentecost, who were they to withstand God?”<sup>68</sup>

Based on studies of female ministers by Roebuck and McClintock Fulkerson, the main concern is for the younger women desiring and entering ministry. “Older women ministers, who are mentioned in the scholarly studies mentioned above, genuinely approve of a biblically based subordination of women, and have adjusted their way of understanding their ministry to fit into this traditional model.”<sup>69</sup> The researchers further mention that younger women find difficulty in reconciling “their call to ministry with denominational and theological restrictions on the ministry of women.”<sup>70</sup>

The question of ecclesiology rears its head in the unfolding of the “women” question. The three main Pentecostal denominations emerging after Azusa Street were The Assemblies of God, The Church of God, and The Church of God in Christ. The Assemblies of God chose a congregational form of government while the other two have an episcopal structure which is hierarchical. Stevenson comments that, “With regard to ecclesiology, feminist theology maintains that a hierarchically structured church is ultimately not compatible with feminist spirituality, even if women are a part of that hierarchy.”<sup>71</sup> Her main contention is the relegation of the Spirit’s activity in the ministry of women. “Claims to empowerment were simultaneously juxtaposed with claims to

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<sup>68</sup> Janet Everts Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy: Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Empowerment of Women,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen ed. (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books Intl., 1999), 314.

<sup>69</sup> Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 315.

<sup>70</sup> Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*: 315.

<sup>71</sup> Lisa P. Stephenson, *Dismantling the Dualisms for American Pentecostal Women in Ministry: a Feminist-Pneumatological Approach*, vol. 9 of *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies* (Leiden: BRILL, 2011), 3.

divine order.”<sup>72</sup> Another factor contributing to the decline of women in ministry in the Pentecostal movement in the 1920s, is the movement’s close association with fundamentalism and evangelicalism.

In spite of the afore-mentioned conditions, women have been able, as shown throughout the various eras of church history, by the Spirit’s agency, to break out and undertake remarkable things for the Kingdom of God. “Because a woman minister preached under the control of the Holy Spirit, early Pentecostals were able to ignore the traditional qualifications for ministry. They saw authority vested in the manifestation of the Spirit, rather than in the human speaker.”<sup>73</sup> Many of these women have a clearly defined call narrative, and the authors list five elements of such a call:

1. A clear perception of difference from other people.
2. A conviction about her sinful nature.
3. An attraction to revival or missionary work.
4. A concrete account of her conversion and call to preach.
5. The construction of an alternative life strategy.<sup>74</sup>

Female ministers with notable call narratives and subsequent remarkable accomplishments would include Maria Woodworth Etter (1844-1924), a renowned evangelist in the Pentecostal tradition. The phenomenon of being “slain in the Spirit” was originally associated with her ministry. Her “popularity and notoriety which carried over into the Pentecostal movement—can be traced to the practice of faith healing and other charismatic gifts she began to employ in meetings in about 1885.”<sup>75</sup> Controversy seem to plague several of these prominent women as their every move was scrutinized, and errors

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<sup>72</sup> Stephenson, *Dismantling the Dualisms*, 18.

<sup>73</sup> Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 318.

<sup>74</sup> Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 319.

<sup>75</sup> W. E. Warner, “Woodworth-Etter, Maria Beulah,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, revised and expanded edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 2002), 1211.

magnified. Poloma in discussing Marie Burgess's contribution to the Assemblies of God, in a time of accommodating "prophetic Pentecostalism alongside the priestly Pentecostalism of the institutional church,"<sup>76</sup> makes this observation: "The bottom line for Marie Burgess's ministry in New York is that there was no existing Pentecostal institution present in the city to challenge her new ministry. . . It was charisma, not institutional resources that tended to separate the called from the chosen in early Pentecostalism."<sup>77</sup>

Another example of extraordinary achievements in ministry is that of Aimee Semple McPherson. Her style was colorful and theatrical, her message, though orthodox was packaged in innovative presentations which created headaches for established Pentecostal denominations as to how to relate with her dramatic and unpredictable behavior. Controversy was also close by but in spite of the hindrances, her legacy is remarkable in establishing the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel with branches in sixty plus countries.

The words of a New York undertaker quoted by Blumhofer seems to fit well at this juncture:

As the Holy Ghost takes sway and control, women rise in place, position and power . . . In these days of promise, these "latter days," there is an overturning, an awakening, an enlargement of vision. Woman under the anointing and imbuing of the Holy Ghost is to be a great factor in the . . . work of these latter days . . . Every woman should receive and honor the Holy Ghost, as He is the Great Emancipator, and the blessed Equalizer, and as He controls, He brings in the equality of the sexes, the brotherhood of man, the sisterhood of woman, the unity of the race, His own motherhood, the brotherhood of Jesus, and the fatherhood of God.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Margaret M. Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 105.

<sup>77</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, 106.

<sup>78</sup> Edith Waldvogel Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 171.

Another remarkable minister to impact the African American Pentecostal scene is Bishop Ida Robinson. Her story, as related by Estrela Alexander is inclusive of founding a significant African American Pentecostal denomination, the “Mt. Sinai Holy Church of America.” That denomination was “established by a woman and continually headed by women, and promoting the equality and leadership of women in ministry.”<sup>79</sup> Alexander gives some background to her work and why she separated from the church group that had ordained her.

Despite little formal education, Robinson sharp intellect, excellent leadership skills, giftedness as a preacher and singer, and biblical knowledge did not escape the attention of the United Holy Church leadership, who frequently called on her for ministry. Her success and prominence prodded other United Holy Church women to vigorously demand a more public presence. The male leadership responded by finally announcing that they would no longer “publicly” ordain women and would restrict those already ordained to lower levels of ordained ministry . . . Robinson felt God leading her to start a new denomination in which women could freely participate in all levels of ministry. When church leaders attempted to change her mind, she responded that God had instructed her to “come out on Mt Sinai and loose the women.” Perceiving this summons as a direct command, she asked, “If Mary the mother of Jesus could carry the Word of God in her womb, why can’t women carry the word of God in their mouth.”<sup>80</sup>

Women’s ministry within the Pentecostal tradition has come a long way with still much distance to cover in the area of theological understanding and acceptance. The four main Pentecostal denominations under review in this thesis have all taken significant forward steps to improve the ministry opportunities of their female congregants. The agency at the helm of this movement is the Holy Spirit who has kept the issue in the forefront by the voices and pens of those constrained to cry out for change.

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<sup>79</sup> Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 305.

<sup>80</sup> Alexander, *Black Fire*, 306.

### **Links, Hooks and Threads**

Looking back creates a historical context in which to evaluate and understand the current Pentecostal movement with all its nuances in belief and praxis. This literary review covers and highlights some salient points in the journey of women seeking to follow what they believe is God's call on their lives. What is evident as each era rolls into the next, some characteristics of the former comes along forging the aspect of continuity. In Jesus' ministry, women featured prominently with the intent of bringing them out of the shadows and into the mainstream of life. As mentioned earlier he commended learning by Mary, was lenient to the adulterous woman, allowed himself to be touched by a woman of questionable character and he accommodated a group of them following him around, who also provided sustenance and care. None of these actions were normal in Jewish culture, but meant to be a precursor of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Women received the anointing and the missionary mandate:

Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit . . . But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:4-8)

Their activity in the early church period as already mentioned was empowered by the Holy Spirit which helped in the spread of the Gospel.

What occurred in successive periods, when the Holy Spirit was subsumed by Fathers and Mothers of the church, was a significant but gradual reversal of the place and privileges of women, taking them closer to the state of their Jewish predecessors. The foregoing was said to establish the thread, linking the early outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts to the latter outpouring in the early 1900s. The review shows similar

liberty and opportunity open to women to preach and teach in the early years of Pentecostalism, but the shadow of the past seems to make its presence felt as the movement gained acceptability and structure. George Santayana, philosopher, reminds us that “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” There are however some differences with the two periods which augers well for women, in that the latter days anointing has birthed male and female scholars and theologians who have presented new material to the debate and are calling certain teachings and practices to accountability. Emerging scholarship on the subject of “women in the church” has presented more clarity on some of the main Scriptures used for the repression and under-utilization of women.

Some of those voices include Edith Blumhofer and Aida Spencer who comment on the state of women in ministry in the Assemblies of God. Also Kimberly Alexander keeps a keen eye on their welfare in the Church of God; she also calls to Pentecostal theologians who “have a responsibility to articulate an understanding of the place of women in the body of Christ based on a Pentecostal soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology and eschatology.”<sup>81</sup> What is agreed on by most of the writers is that institutionalization was gained by the sacrifice of the prophetic charisma and replaced by a priestly hierarchical government. Alexander further expresses her concerns:

The church too must be liberated. It must be liberated to be a real holy communion. If the church is to be the body of Christ it is called to be, a worshiping missionary fellowship modeling to the world the unity that is inherent in the body of Christ, then it should be truly egalitarian . . . Secondly the Church of God must move to legitimize what is already present in the church. If women already vote in the highest governing authority, they should be given voice at the

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<sup>81</sup> Kimberly Ervin Alexander and R H. Gause, *Women in Leadership: A Pentecostal Perspective*, Pentecostal Leadership Series (Cleveland, TN: Center for Pentecostal Leadership & Care, 2006), 22.

grassroots level. If the Holy Spirit already gives women authoritarian voice, then the institution must not restrict that authority.<sup>82</sup>

The critical aspect of this debate is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and what recognition and accommodation is given to its out-working. This concern is at the heart of Stephenson's exposition:

However, the implication of the outpouring of the Spirit is that one is not only a disciple of Christ, but of the Spirit as well. The Christological 'way of life' presented in the Gospel of Luke is continued and fulfilled in Acts in a pneumatological way. In the absence of Jesus the teacher, it is the Spirit who is speaking *to* the community and *through* the community. With regard to the former, it is the Spirit who communicates the message and vision *to* persons. With regard to the latter, it is the Spirit who speaks *through* others to proclaim the message and vision of this way of life.<sup>83</sup>

Women have enjoyed greater liberty to participate in the life and ministry of the church when the Spirit is given preeminence. This is the place where church assumes its true identity in the world by showing forth the glory and majesty of the Almighty God through the agency of his Holy Spirit.

The Church of God of Prophecy is well positioned at this point in its history to make the leap forward, not only into the harvest, but also in completing the repentance started in 1984 by taking another look at its daughters in the light of Joel 2:28-29, with the express purpose of teaching and equipping each one to function successfully in whatever God has called them to be and to do. Based on material published in the *White Wing Messenger*, the official publication of the church, in its June 2017 issue, there is now an emphasis on training and equipping leaders both nationwide and internationally. There is also the mantra of the MAR's regional convention, adopted this year, "each one, win one", as an effort to double membership by the year 2019. The need for women in

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<sup>82</sup> Alexander and Gause, *Women in Leadership*, 22.

<sup>83</sup> Stephenson, *Dismantling the Dualisms*, 169.

the church to be mobilized into soul winning and missionary endeavors is essential at this point, hence the call and focus of this thesis, to increase the appointment of women as pastors in the Mid-Atlantic Region of the Church of God of Prophecy. Church historian Adrian Varlack articulates the hope and promise of a church focused on the *missio dei*.

The COGOP itself was birthed [re-born 1923] as a corrective to what was seen as a fresh departure from sound Bible premises however then understood. Therefore, correctives are part of its spiritual DNA.

The COGOP's clearly stated commitment to walk in the light of God's Word as led by God's Spirit provides solid ground for ongoing change and realignment with God's purposes in building His Kingdom. Consequently, the Church may, from time to time, better understand those purposes. It would be irresponsible and a dereliction of duty not to make corrections when led by the Spirit to do so.<sup>84</sup>

### **Summary**

From the beginning of time, God has sought a people through whom his purposes on the earth are fulfilled. We observe God placing his image and likeness in "the Adam", the male and female. The Old Testament chronicles a wealth of interactions between God and his people which offer a glimpse into the contribution of women. Though not large, as they were restrained and constrained by their culture to specific spheres of activity, these contributions were nevertheless significant, revealing that God will use the vessel that is qualified and available. The New Testament brings a paradigm shift in Jesus' confrontations with Jewish culture at the time. Much of His criticisms centered around the life of the oppressed and the treatment of women.

The early church offered hope and scope to prophesying daughters in accordance with the Lord's mandate, but we observe also such liberty being gradually curtailed and eventually ushering in a period of repression on women in general. What this thesis also

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<sup>84</sup> Adrian L. Varlack, *Church of God of Prophecy: Concise History, Polity, Doctrine, and Future*, Foundations (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2010), 142.



highlights is the resilience of women, empowered by God's Spirit, who in spite of all obstacles were able to achieve God's purposes in their time. The medieval period was indeed a dark time for women and for the church as we see the absence of significant charisma and the rise of fathers and mothers of the church and the entrance of Mariology. The church fathers added their interpretations and suspicions regarding the person and place of women. Most conclusions were negative but somehow their views and opinions still have influence in the church today.

The Reformation proved to be the precursor to the Holiness Movements flowing into the Classical Pentecostalism outpouring in the early 1900's. Women have been an active part of the story, and as churches in the current Pentecostal tradition embrace their true identity as "people of the Spirit" women will emerge and assume their place in the Body of Christ.

## CHAPTER THREE

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

#### Overview

Jesus stood in the Temple in Jerusalem as recorded in the Gospel of Luke and declared to the assembled religious leaders what his mission was in coming to the earth, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”<sup>1</sup> This mission encompassed all races and classes of humankind and was fully accomplished according to His prayer in the Gospel of John.

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.<sup>2</sup>

The community that He came to build was inaugurated, comprised of the Twelve Apostles and many others who believed in Him. This group was instructed by Jesus to wait for a special blessing and promise from the Father: The Holy Spirit.

The ministry of Jesus on the earth ushered in a time of great hope for all the under-classes in the society among whom were women. This chapter will first look at the numerous encounters Jesus had with the women of his time and what meaning can be gleaned from His actions. Thereafter, three portions of Scripture will be examined as they

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 4:18-19. All Scripture citations are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> John 17:3-8.

pertain to women in the church, Acts 2:1-4 which records the Holy Spirit descending and anointing the believers in the upper room and its impact on the new community, and the city and regions beyond. The second portion of Scripture will be 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 which addresses the conduct of women in the assembly that has generated a myriad of exegetical conclusions. The final Scripture to be examined is 1 Timothy 2:9-12. This portion stimulates much more discussion and is critical to arguments in favor of women being allowed to attain leadership in general, and pastoral positions, in the Church. The historical context of these Scriptures and the culture into which Christians were immersed will be evaluated for a more precise understanding of the Apostle Paul's instructions.

### **Choosing the Better Part**

The Gospel of Luke gives extensive coverage of Jesus' encounters with women in his daily ministry. Luke records three parables of Jesus that mention women in a positive manner which the other Gospels do not report. In Luke 13:20-21, the Kingdom of God is likened to yeast that a woman took and mixed well into dough. In Luke 15:8-10, Jesus illustrates the value of a soul by this parable of the lost coin. In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus uses the persistence of a widow to teach perseverance in prayer. "According to some scholars Luke's interest in women is part of his general concern for the oppressed and marginalized in Jewish society. These include the poor, tax collectors, widows, sinners, lepers, Gentiles, the Samaritans and women. This is unquestionably a major motif in Luke's Gospel."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Kevin Giles, "Jesus and Women," in *Raising Women Leaders: Perspectives on Liberating Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Contexts*, Shane Clifton and Jacqueline Grey ed. (Chester Hill, NSW: Australasian Pentecostal Studies, 2009), L 97, Kindle.

Grenz quotes James Hurley's observation, "The foundation-stone of Jesus" attitude toward women was his vision of them as persons to whom and for whom he had come. He did not perceive them primarily in terms of their sex, age or marital status; he seems to have considered them in terms of their relation (or lack of one) to God."<sup>4</sup> These were persons primarily ignored and avoided by the religious leaders of that time, hence Jesus' ministry focused on the following four aspects of women's welfare:

1. Overturned the culturally determined priorities for women.
2. Rejected the Jewish notion that household maintenance constituted the only appropriate role for women in society (Luke 10:39).
3. He defied the practice of excluding women from the study of the Torah.
4. He set aside the customary prejudices of his day and restored the Old Testament injunction that both men and women apply themselves to learning God's law (Luke 11:27-28).<sup>5</sup>

The above concepts are reinforced by Spencer in her analogy of the "torn curtain." "When Jesus died the curtain barring entrance into the Holy of Holies was torn in two, from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:51). That torn curtain signifies that now God's Spirit no longer dwells in a place but in a people."<sup>6</sup> Indeed Jesus' mandate "to set the oppressed free" was set in place by his teaching, death and resurrection. Women were commanded to "go to my brothers and tell them" (John 20:17), that He is risen, they were commissioned by The Lord himself to proclaim the good news.

"Gospel writers all agree that women were the first to hear and experience firsthand the resurrection message, they do not elaborate on its importance. Consequently, scholars disagree about its theological significance . . . this meant that in

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<sup>4</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 74, quoted in James Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 83.

<sup>5</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 75.

<sup>6</sup> Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2010), 44.

God's new economy, men and women are credible witnesses and capable messengers of the risen Lord."<sup>7</sup> The foregoing conclusion was validated on the day of Pentecost when the assembled disciples, men and women, in obedience to the Lord's command waited for the sending of the Holy Spirit, and experienced the unction to go, preach, teach and make disciples of men.

### **New Community**

The community of believers in Jesus Christ were a unique group which accommodated the presence and ministry of women without any cultural baggage. The Twelve were all Jewish men with a new understanding of the person and place of women in society. What can be credited for this attitudinal shift? Alexander & Gause offers a thought:

The New Testament goes beyond prediction. All prophetic predictions offer a shadow of its fulfillment; so, it is expected that the fulfillment will exceed what has been seen in the prophecy. . .the New Testament instructions concerning women did not arise from contemporary religious and cultural climates. Both Palestinian and Hellenistic cultures placed women in roles of subservience. By process of elimination, it seems that the only adequate answer to the question is that this shift in regard to women came from Jesus Himself. His authority and His alone can account for the elevation of women that is seen in the New Testament.<sup>8</sup>

It was necessary for this transitional group bearing the torch of Christianity to have that high standard set before them, because their message was universal. The empowerment to carry that mandate was fulfilled as promised in the following scriptures.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 76.

<sup>8</sup> Kimberly Ervin Alexander and R. H. Gause, *Women in Leadership: A Pentecostal Perspective*, Pentecostal Leadership Series (Cleveland, TN.: Center for Pentecostal Leadership & Care, 2006), 65.

<sup>9</sup> Acts 2:1-4.

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

“Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”<sup>10</sup>

Observations from these verses confirm that they were *all* together and *all* of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter also affirmed in his language of “*sons and daughters*” and “*both men and women*.” The assembled ones were not just the Apostles but Acts 1:15 numbers the gathering at one hundred and twenty people to whom Peter applied the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy.

Grenz quotes Osborne in this prophetic statement: “The elevation of women to a ministerial role is a sign of the inbreaking kingdom, demonstrating that the old order has ceased and a new set of relationships has begun.”<sup>11</sup> Grenz continued to outline the radical and far-reaching implications of the inclusion of women in the Pentecost event, “Not only did women receive Christ’s commission as credible witnesses to the resurrection, but at Pentecost they also received the Spirit’s power to carry out this central community responsibility. This means that women had received the same foundational qualifications for ministry as men in the New Testament church.”<sup>12</sup>

In discussing the “New Covenant” and the place of women in ministry, Kevin Conner offers the following salient points:

- a. Women may be born again of the Holy Spirit and become new creatures in Christ, even as men (John 3:1-5).

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<sup>10</sup> Acts 2:14-18.

<sup>11</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 77.

<sup>12</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 79.

b. Women may receive the Holy Spirit baptism and anointing as well as men (Acts 2:1-11). This is in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28-32 with Acts 2:14-21). God said He would pour out His Spirit on the sons and daughters, servants and handmaidens.

c. Men and women may speak in tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance (Acts 2:1-4). Both men and women were baptized into the one body of Christ, which is the Church, at Pentecost (1 Corinthians 12:13).

d. Men and women are together priests in the New Covenant Church. It is no longer a Levitical priesthood available only for one tribe of a chosen nation, and for men only (1 Peter 2:5-9; Revelation 1:5-6; 5:9-10).

e. Women may prophesy as well as men (Acts 2:17-21 with Joel 2:28-32).

Is there anything higher than to be a mouthpiece of the Lord in speaking the prophetic word? Both men and women under this dispensation may prophesy. The Spirit is available for all regardless of nation, social distinction, or sex.

Prophesy includes edification, exhortation and comfort, according to Paul (1 Corinthians 14:3).

Edify = “to instruct and improve; to profit morally or spiritually.”

Exhort = “to incite by words or advice; to advise or warn earnestly.”

Comfort = “to impart strength and hope to; to console.”<sup>13</sup>

The apostle Paul likewise acknowledged the missionary work of women as they labored with him to further the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In Romans 16, he greets and commends several co-workers and helpers, such as Phoebe a deacon in the church, and Junia, esteemed among the apostles. The name Junia has generated much debate due to her being a woman. Commentaries such as Lange and McClintock & Strong lean toward the change of her name to the male “Junias.” The evidence for this rendering is weak and found mainly in the English translations from the 1940s to the early 1970s. “The letter carrier was a woman (Romans 16:1-2), and at least five of the nine women Paul greets were ministry colleagues (“co-workers,” Romans 16:3, 6-7, 12).”<sup>14</sup> The church at Philippi

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<sup>13</sup> Kevin J. Conner, *The Church in the New Testament* (Kent, England: Sovereign World International, 1982), 242-43.

<sup>14</sup> Linda L. Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible.” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd edition, Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 116.

also gives another example of Paul's interaction with two women leaders who were having some disagreement (Philippians 4:2-3). Even though Paul addressed their quarrelling, he gave "no hint that these or any other women should not be in leadership roles."<sup>15</sup>

Among the nonbiblical traditions preserved of the apostles, few are better attested than that of Paul's empowerment of women in ministry. Before his call to the church in Antioch, he appears to have engaged in widespread evangelism in Asia Minor (Acts 11:25-26; 15:41). Consistent with Paul's designation of seven women as his fellow laborers (Rom 16:3, 6, 12, 16; Phil 4:2-3) are later accounts of women established in ministry. Pliny the Younger, writing from Asia Minor to the emperor Trajan in A.D. 112, tells of interrogating two leaders of the Christian community, slave women called *ministrae* ("deacons" or "ministers"; Pliny *Ep.* 96-97).<sup>16</sup>

It is important to establish the apostle Paul's affirmation of women in ministry and in leadership positions in the early churches because of some Scriptures which seem to restrict and condemn women's participation in the work of the church. The letter to the Galatian church is considered one of Paul's earliest, and in it he projects some of his core priorities in ministry; one is "to help Jew and Gentile to see each other as "Christ," and therefore "one."<sup>17</sup> Spencer also highlights the Apostle's extension of this privilege to the slave and free as well as male and female. Galatians 3:27-28 is used extensively by egalitarians as Paul's express affirmation of equality of all believers in Christ. Another observation alluded to by Spencer is what appears to be Paul's negation of the Jewish daily prayer:

Blessed art thou who has not made me a Gentile,  
Blessed art thou who has not made me an uneducated man,  
Blessed art thou who hast not made me a woman.

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<sup>15</sup> Belleville, "Women Leaders in the Bible." in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 120.

<sup>16</sup> Catherine C. Kroeger, "Women in the Early Church," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, The IVP Bible Dictionary Series (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 1219.

<sup>17</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 65.



(*Palestinian Talmud Ber.* 136b).<sup>18</sup>

In Galatians 3:27-28 the Apostle states, “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew or *Greek*, *slave* nor free, male nor *female*, for you are all one in Christ.” This scripture indeed contradicts the Jewish prayer mentioned previously and Paul’s response was necessarily framed to address this culturally mixed church (emphasis mine).

Therefore, in coming to a decision on Paul’s general teaching and behavior towards women there seems to be some consistency in his following the radical and counter-cultural example of Jesus. In his efforts to bring structure and order to the Church, there is no contradiction in his directives if taken in their historical context and noting peculiar cultural influences.

Turning to the New Testament gift lists in Peter and Paul revealed no gender restrictions whatsoever. Considered in light of the Greco-Roman milieu of increased Roman women’s freedom and participation in voluntary associations, one cannot argue that Paul assumed gender restrictions on the use of gifts or the roles associated with them. Men and women then certainly would not have. Rather, the principles of God’s distribution of gifts and the leadership roles of Christian ministry derived exegetically from these passages (1 Pet 4; Rom 12; Eph 4; 1 Cor 12; Acts 2) should provide the theological basis for constructing a biblical theology of women in ministry. . . Paul understood that such women had received gifts from “one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses” (1 Cor 13:11). He along with Moses would agree that all God’s people were full of his Spirit and prophesy!<sup>19</sup>

Based on John’s epistles, women were leaders particularly in the house churches (2 John 1) which formed “the foundational bases for the furtherance of the gospel in their respective communities, with the hosts becoming “fellow laborers” (3 John 8).”<sup>20</sup> The

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<sup>18</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 64.

<sup>19</sup> Fredrick J. Long, “Christ’s Gifted Bride: Gendered Members in Ministry in Acts and Paul,” in *Women, Ministry and the Gospel: Exploring New Paradigms*, Mark Husbands and Timothy Larsen, ed. (Downers Grove, IL.: IVP Academic, 2007), 122-123.

<sup>20</sup> Kroeger, “Women in the Early Church,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament*, 1220.

“elect lady” of 2 John was clearly in-charge of the congregation in her home. Lydia was a successful business woman and hosted a church in her home. “Paul commends Phoebe to the church at Rome (Rom 16:1-2) ... He describes her with two remarkable titles. She is a minister and a leader. . . When the noun *diakonos* refers to an individual male it is always translated “minister” by the King James Version and usually translated “minister by other versions.”<sup>21</sup>

### **The Church in Corinth**

One of the troublesome Scripture passages which needs to be examined in this thesis is 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. The first duty of the reader of Scripture, according to Craig S. Keener, “is the exegetical one: understanding the text on its own terms in its own context. Only after we have understood it contextually can we apply it appropriately.”<sup>22</sup> Therefore it is necessary to consider the Corinthian church in the city of Corinth at the time of Paul’s writing. There is much re-orientation and re-alignment evident in the Apostle’s letter to the church, “Paul addresses the issue of the church’s identity over against its cultural surroundings and seeks to stake out firm boundaries. The problem was not that the church was in Corinth but that too much of Corinth was in the church (Fee 1987:4).”<sup>23</sup> This city was unique in its culture and social life; it “had a mixed ethnic population of Roman freedmen, indigenous Greeks, and immigrants from far and wide. . . a strong Jewish community was well integrated and on good terms with the wider

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<sup>21</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 113-114.

<sup>22</sup> Craig S. Keener, “Learning in the Assemblies: 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd edition, Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 164.

<sup>23</sup> David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 8, quoted in Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edition (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987), 4.

community.”<sup>24</sup> The cosmopolitan flavor of the city brought with it economic prosperity and a fiercely independent spirit to the fortunate ones, with the majority left behind in poverty. The religious life of the city was diverse with shrines to a myriad of gods. Vice flourished as well with Corinth becoming legendary for moral and sexual looseness.

The women in this Greco-Roman culture experienced different circumstances which were either suffered or enjoyed. The Greek women were more cloistered and exposed to few social freedoms. One particular expression they were allowed in cultic religion was “The exultant shout . . . and the shrill vocalizing could drown out the more serious deliberations of the men (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:34). Women were well aware that in the sway of religion they might engage in aggression that would otherwise have been impossible in a repressive society.”<sup>25</sup> Roman women on the other hand enjoyed the liberty to engage in social causes and in worship. Wealthy women, of influential families became patrons of religious sects, hence with this group, “The new religion of Jesus Christ fitted admirably the needs and spiritual aspirations of women throughout the empire.”<sup>26</sup>

Another striking aspect of this society is the honor shame culture which overshadowed all areas of life. The language of the Apostle in this epistle definitely acknowledges this nuance, and some of his corrective commands seem influenced therewith. Fee surmised that “the picture that emerges is one of a predominantly Gentile community. . . As former pagans they brought to the Christian faith a Hellenistic

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<sup>24</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Kroeger, “Women in the Early Church,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament*, 1280.

<sup>26</sup> Kroeger, “Women in the Early Church,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament*, 1280.

worldview and attitude toward ethical behavior.”<sup>27</sup> This was indeed Paul’s challenge as expressed also by Garland:

The implications of this backdrop for understanding the problems that beset the Corinthian church should not be underestimated. Few Christians could have been unaffected by the dominant culture surrounding them . . . Most, if not all, of the problems that Paul addresses were hatched from the influence of this setting. Values that were antithetical to the message of the cross—particularly those related to honor and status so basic to the Greco-Roman social system, in which power manifesting itself in ruthlessness and self-advancement is thought to be the only sensible course . . . Its values played havoc on Paul’s attempt to build a community based on love, selflessness, and the equal worth of every member.<sup>28</sup>

### **1 Corinthians 14:34-35**

*Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.*

Placing these verses in context requires a perusal of all that preceded and follow these instructions. Chapter 14 addresses several issues as Paul seeks to set order in the church and correct behaviors that are contrary to sound Christian teaching. The question one would ask on reading these verses is, what situation was Paul addressing? This entire epistle is written in response to stated problems involving men and women. In chapter 11 several principles and practices were addressed such as (1) headship in the Body of Christ and head-covering relating to men and women (1 Corinthians 11:3-16) and (2) showing brotherly love and propriety in the observance of The Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-33). In chapter 14 the instructions continue with the proper ordering of the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:1-25) and orderly and respectful behavior in the worship service (1 Corinthians 14:26-39). The key thread running through

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<sup>27</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edition, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2014), 4.

<sup>28</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 5-6.

the Apostle's mind seems to be the emphasis of the fact that "God is not a God of disorder but of peace."<sup>29</sup>

Scholars differ greatly on the meaning of the Scripture in question.

Complementarians view this as Paul's clear prohibition on women's participation in the worship life of the church by applying a literalist interpretation. Conner however invokes Paul's known disposition towards women: "It should be remembered that Paul has already said in 1 Corinthians 11:5 that men and women may pray and prophesy in the church. He does not contradict himself. The verses in chapter 14 must be interpreted in the light of custom and also of Paul's whole teaching concerning women. He is speaking to the same church."<sup>30</sup> The item under consideration according to the flow of the Scripture is the speaking of prophecy and its consequent evaluation. Grenz comments that "Paul already acknowledged the freedom of women to engage in this activity ... Consequently, a growing number of complementarians claim that Paul means to bar women from participating in the evaluation of prophetic utterances."<sup>31</sup> This point is attested to by Husbands & Larsen who offers an interesting viewpoint:

Paul permits women to pray and prophesy in the church in 1 Corinthians 11, which indicates that his command that the women be silent in 1 Corinthians 14:34 is to be applied to the evaluation of prophecies. Women can utter prophecies, but they are not to sit in judgment on the prophecies delivered by men. When it comes time to judge prophecies, the women are to remain silent. Keener argues that the focus of the silence of the women is on their asking questions (1 Cor 14:35), but he grants that asking questions is seen in ancient literature to be a means of challenging the authority of a speaker.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:33a.

<sup>30</sup> Conner, *The Church in the New Testament*, 250.

<sup>31</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 122.

<sup>32</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., "What Women Can Do in Ministry: Full Participation Within Biblical Boundaries," in *Women, Ministry and the Gospel: Exploring New Paradigms*, Mark Husbands and Timothy Larsen, ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 39.

Another similar view proffered by complementarians is that “the careful weighing of prophecies was a ministerial function,”<sup>33</sup> and with women involved, it would constitute an exercise of authority over men. None of the foregoing seem to be the case according to Garland, but simply Paul’s efforts “to curb the Corinthians’ unruly and wayward expressions of freedom rather than to encourage them.”<sup>34</sup> The Scripture in focus can now be separated into its three focal points for the purpose of this thesis.

***Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak but must be in submission:***

Spencer gives some exegetical insights into these verse: “Paul employs a different word for silence in 1 Corinthians 14 (*sigao* vv. 28, 30, 34) than he does in 1 Timothy 2 . . . *Sigao* is used in the New Testament to signify listening, not creating a disturbance . . . At Ephesus the women were flaunting their wealth by their attire, while at Corinth they were boisterous, flaunting their freedom in Christ.”<sup>35</sup> Spencer goes on to explain that three groups of people were silenced in chapter 14: “speakers in tongues when there was no interpreter (14:27-28), one prophet when a revelation was made to another prophet (14:30-31), and women learning in a shameful manner (14:33-36).”<sup>36</sup> The desire of Paul here is to maintain harmony and reflect conduct that is to the glory of God and a positive witness to those on the outside.

In this command, there seems to be some contradiction by Paul, because in 1 Corinthians 11:5 and also 14:31 “where he affirms that “all” are able to prophesy in turn. . . If tongues and prophesy are spiritual gifts, and if each individual is allotted gifts as the

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<sup>33</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 122.

<sup>34</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 667.

<sup>35</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 105.

<sup>36</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 104-105.

Spirit chooses (12:11)—presumably without regard to gender, social status, or race—why should women with these gifts be silent in the assembly?”<sup>37</sup> Due to the fact that (*gynē*) can be interpreted as woman or wife, some scholars have concluded that Paul is dealing “with talkative wives who disrupt the services by asking their husbands questions in the services.”<sup>38</sup> Verse 35 lends strength to this position as the injunction is “to ask their husbands at home.” The consensus seems to point to these interruptions occurring “during formal teaching sessions, which were conducted in the form of orderly discussion and argument, or perhaps the women were interrupting either the Scripture exposition in the services or the evaluation of prophetic messages.”<sup>39</sup>

***As the law says:***

There is much debate as to which law Paul is invoking. Fee, who firmly projects that these verses were not of Pauline authorship but were added, states that Paul’s appeal to “the law” mitigates against the Apostle’s efforts to establish churches in Christ and not in Jewish custom. “When Paul elsewhere appeals to “the law,” he regularly cites the text (e.g., 9:8; 14:21), usually to support a point he himself is making. Nowhere else in the entire corpus does he appeal to the Law in this general, but absolute, way as binding on Christian behavior. More difficult yet is the fact that the Law does not say any such thing.”<sup>40</sup> Husbands & Larsen sees this inference as pointing to Paul’s previous comments in 11:7-9 which he cited regarding head coverings. Their assessment equates the “Law” with “what has been written” with 1 Corinthians 4:6 as an example:

There Paul expresses his desire that his audience will ‘learn not to go beyond what has been written,’ and the reference to what has been written appears to

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<sup>37</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 665.

<sup>38</sup> Conner, *The Church in the New Testament*, 250.

<sup>39</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 124.

<sup>40</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 791.

point back to the Old Testament texts cited earlier in 1 Corinthians pertaining to boasting and introduced by ‘it has been written (1 Corinthians 1:19, 31; 2:9; 3:19-20). Paul’s reference in 1 Corinthians 4:6 to “what has been written,” on this understanding, would parallel the words ‘as the law also says’ in 14:34. Both are pointing back to related interpretations of the OT that has appeared earlier in the letter. Thus the call for women to be silent when prophecies are evaluated in 14:34 is based on the same transcultural considerations about gender Paul articulated from Genesis 1—2 in 1 Corinthians 11:7-9.<sup>41</sup>

***If they want to enquire about something, they should ask their husbands at home:  
For it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church:***

The Corinthian women of this period were generally less educated than the men who were privy to available learning and tutoring. Greek culture imposed strong conservative values on women and most married women were confined to the sphere of the home. “Paul implicitly makes husbands responsible for their wives’ tutoring. . . Paul avoids social impropriety by advising the women to avoid questioning other men during the Christian education component of the gathering, but he is not against their learning.”<sup>42</sup>

Alexander & Gause comment on the term “disgraceful” as meaning *aischron* (shame). They contend that this word connotes a violation of cultural norms, “Paul uses this word for cultural restrictions; he is not describing sinful behavior.”<sup>43</sup> Garland also agrees, “Shame, in this context, pertains to what society views as inappropriate behavior and is relative to a given culture. The word occurs in 11:6 and is related to a wife’s shaming her spouse.”<sup>44</sup> Fee however, has a unique assessment of the entire passage under consideration:

The final reason given for their being silent in the assembly is that a woman’s speaking out in church, apparently for the given reasons, is “disgraceful” (v. 34),

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<sup>41</sup> Hamilton Jr., “What Women Can Do in Ministry,” in *Women, Ministry and the Gospel*, 47.

<sup>42</sup> Keener, “Learning in the Assemblies,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 171.

<sup>43</sup> Alexander and Gause, *Women in Leadership* 81.

<sup>44</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 668.



in the sense of being inconsistent with accepted standards of modesty. Again, as with the preceding rule and prohibition, the statement is unqualified. . . This is the sure giveaway that Paul could not have authored these considerably contradictory qualifications, which stand in absolute contradiction of the earlier affirmation about “every woman who prays or prophesies” (11:5).<sup>45</sup>

For the many who believe that these verses are in their right place in the Scriptures, Pierce offers a summation of the arguments, “most likely the passage addresses disruptive questions in an environment where silence was expected of new learners—which most women were. . . Paul thus upholds church order and avoids appearance of social impropriety; he also supports learning before speaking.”<sup>46</sup> The conclusion of the whole matter is that, “None of these principles prohibit women in very different cultural settings from speaking God’s word.”<sup>47</sup>

### **The Church in Ephesus**

As in the case of Corinth, it would be helpful to explore the city of Ephesus, noting its societal nuances and culture along with the church in its midst. One of the strong influences of Ephesian culture was the worship of “Artemis.” In this cult “the female was exalted and considered superior to the male.”<sup>48</sup> Grenz adds further insights in determining Paul’s intent in his instructions to the church. “Whatever the actual situation, it occurred in the context of a city known as a center of pagan religion. Ephesus boasted the largest temple in Asia Minor, which was dedicated to Artemis, the goddess of fertility. The rites surrounding this place of worship endangered the purity of the church.”<sup>49</sup> Added to this cultic environment was the activity of false teachers who seem

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<sup>45</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 792.

<sup>46</sup> Keener, “Learning in the Assemblies,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 171.

<sup>47</sup> Keener, “Learning in the Assemblies,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 171.

<sup>48</sup> Linda L. Belleville, “Teaching and Usurping Authority: 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd edition, Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 219.

<sup>49</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 126.

to gain some hearing among the women of the church. “The women were being deceived because of their untutored ignorance. They were enmeshed in a destructive situation surrounded with different doctrines somehow very appealing yet very dangerous.”<sup>50</sup> The inconsiderate display of wealth by the women also bothered the Apostle along with men who were quarrelsome during the prayer meeting.

The implications for women in ministry is also affected by the content of 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Some aspects of this pericope were addressed earlier in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; therefore, only additional material will be examined, keeping in mind Mounce’s reference to Scholer’s comment, “All interpretation is socially located, individually skewed, and ecclesiastically and theoretically conditioned.”<sup>51</sup>

### **1 Timothy 2:9-14**

*I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.*

There are several issues mentioned in these verses. First, Paul addresses adornment and attitudes; secondly, he permits the women to learn but they should display the appropriate demeanor and thirdly, the question of women teaching in the church is addressed. The challenge in these verses as well as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, is the determination of “what is principle and what is cultural application.”<sup>52</sup> Separating this pericope into these sections will assist a fuller examination.

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<sup>50</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 84.

<sup>51</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 103.

<sup>52</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, 109.

***<sup>9</sup>I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, <sup>10</sup>but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.***

“There is a large body of evidence, both Hellenistic and Jewish, which equated “dressing up” on the part of women with both sexual wantonness and wifely insubordination.”<sup>53</sup> There was also the aspect of the pagan culture on the outside and the need to present the church as a counter-culture. “They ought to appear and behave in a way that distinguishes them from the appearance and behavior of women who were in the service of the pagan temples and shrines.”<sup>54</sup> The issue of the Christian woman and her manner of dress extends even to our time with the same nuances and apprehensions. “But the general impression is clear, that women are to be discreet and modest in their dress, and not to wear any garment which is deliberately suggestive or seductive. This establishes a universal principle.”<sup>55</sup> The Apostle now introduces a new form of adornment for the Christian woman, that of “good deeds.” “While these ideals are often found in secular thought, it does not mean that Paul is simply borrowing Hellenistic ideals, and the ultimate ideal—conduct appropriate to godly women—is thoroughly Christian.”<sup>56</sup>

***<sup>11</sup>A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.***

Here Paul commands the women to learn. Grenz presents an interesting analysis of verses 11-12. “Some readers find in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 a series of injunctions (women should learn in silence, be in subjection, not teach and not exercise authority over men).

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<sup>53</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, revised edition, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 71.

<sup>54</sup> Alexander and Gause, *Women in Leadership*, 93.

<sup>55</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus: God's Good News for the World*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996 (2001)), 83.

<sup>56</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, 109.

However, Paul issues only one command: “Let a woman learn” (v. 11). The other phrases set the parameters of the directive.”<sup>57</sup> Mounce confirms the radical implications of Paul’s speech, “Paul here in contrast to segments of Judaism that prohibited women from learning, asserts the ability and value of women’s education. . . While this is true, the emphasis of the verse is not that women *should* learn but *how* they should learn.”<sup>58</sup> These instructions by the Apostle are similar to those found in 1 Corinthians 14:34, and scholars agree on the understanding that women are allowed to learn, but in a quiet and orderly manner thereby showing respect for their teachers. “This is a local application because of the particular controversies at Ephesus, but the character of learning is universal.”<sup>59</sup>

***<sup>12</sup>I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. <sup>13</sup>For Adam was formed first, then Eve. <sup>14</sup>And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.***

Scholars debate profusely the meaning of key words and phrases in these two verses. Many turn to the grammar for guidance in their exegesis. Spencer contends that, “The noun *didaskalos* implies a teacher who is qualified. . . The women at Ephesus had to learn, consequently, they were not ready to teach. Paul wanted to restrain the women from teaching until they themselves were well instructed.”<sup>60</sup> Mounce, however, presents his conclusions as, “Women are not to take the reins of the church, exercising authority over the men and teaching them; rather they are to learn in quietness, in submissiveness. Paul sees the prior creation of Adam (Gen 2) as justification for male leadership in the church.”<sup>61</sup> Stott agrees: “It seems to me that the better and more biblical proposal,

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<sup>57</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 128.

<sup>58</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, 119.

<sup>59</sup> Alexander and Gause, *Women in Leadership*, 95.

<sup>60</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 86.

<sup>61</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, 148.

suggested earlier, is that Paul's instructions cover only the universal principle of female submission to male 'headship', and not its changeable cultural expression."<sup>62</sup>

Grenz however sees things differently and sheds some grammatical insight to verse 12 in explaining:

Those who see two prohibitions in 1 Timothy 2:12 connect the object "a man" solely with the second verb, "to have authority over." They note that this Greek verb requires its direct object in the genitive case, whereas "to teach" requires the accusative. Because "man" is in the genitive case, it is the object only of "to have authority over" and not "to teach." They likewise claim that "a man" is too far removed from "to teach" to be understood as qualifying the meaning of that verb.<sup>63</sup>

Spencer agrees with the foregoing, also determining that "the verb *authentein*, as all verbs of ruling, takes the genitive case of the person. . .over whom the destructive domination is executed. Consequently, grammatically "man" is most likely to be the object only of *authentein*."<sup>64</sup> She goes on to explain that the women were part of the church's educational process. "Paul here is not prohibiting women from preaching nor praying nor having an edifying authority nor pastoring. He is simply prohibiting them from teaching and using their authority in a destructive way."<sup>65</sup>

In view of the grammatical nuances, Belleville restructures this verse to read, "I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a domineering way but to have a quiet demeanor [literally, 'to be in calmness']."<sup>66</sup> To bolster her argument Belleville contends that the women were influenced by the cult of Artemis whose mythology portrays the woman as first, then the man followed, which "made Artemis and all her female

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<sup>62</sup> Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, 86.

<sup>63</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 129.

<sup>64</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 87.

<sup>65</sup> Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 88.

<sup>66</sup> Belleville, "Teaching and Usurping Authority," in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 219.

adherents superior to men.”<sup>67</sup> Paul’s statements in 1 Timothy 2:13-14 seem to be addressing this problem.

To sum up these arguments is nearly impossible, but some guidelines may help to form an informed conclusion, as Husbands advises, “The important concession that is made here is that the principles should be applied in a manner appropriate to the culture.”<sup>68</sup> With this idea in mind, Alexander seems to offer a plausible summary:

Paul extends his instructions to the actual function of teaching by women. . . Does this text mean what it says? Yes. Is it an absolute? No. How do we know it is not an absolute? We know that Paul had allowed women to minister with him, even teach in other places and times. The church at Ephesus would have known Priscilla, who with her husband Aquila, had ministered with Paul in Corinth and Ephesus. She is one of the instructors of Apollos, teaching him in the city of Ephesus (Acts 18:26). Paul recognized the leadership of both Aquila and Priscilla in the church that met in their house in Rome (Romans 16:3-5). Paul recognized Phoebe as a deacon (Romans 16:1). That he would call this woman a deacon is of note because he describes deacons as those who have served well and have gained “a good standing [great dignity] for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 3:13). He spoke of Junia, a woman, as a person “prominent among the apostles” (Romans 16:7). He acknowledged women who had labored with him in the gospel (Romans 16:12; Philippians 4:1-3). So the prohibition stated here is not a general prohibition; it is not a part of the polity of the New Testament church. The peculiar circumstances at the time of this writing made this a wise ruling for this time and this place. The ruling is neither universal nor absolute.<sup>69</sup>

The Body of Christ must represent Him in all aspects of his humanity. “If clergy do function as the representatives of our Lord, then restricting the ordained office to males can readily cloud the symbolism of Christ’s inclusive humanity. Ontological representation demands that women and men serve together within the ordained office.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Belleville, “Teaching and Usurping Authority,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 219.

<sup>68</sup> I. Howard Marshall, “Women in Ministry: A Further Look at 1 Timothy 2,” in *Women, Ministry and the Gospel: Exploring New Paradigms*, Mark Husbands and Timothy Larsen, ed. (Downers Grove, IL.: IVP Academic, 2007), 67.

<sup>69</sup> Alexander and Gause, *Women in Leadership*, 95-96.

<sup>70</sup> Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 207.

## **Summary**

The two passages of Scripture chosen for this thesis are the ones frequently used to restrict the access of women to leadership roles in the church, but as this theological evaluation reveal, the integrity of Paul's opinion and attitude towards women in ministry remains constant. The difficulty from this distance is to determine the exact circumstances precipitating the Apostle's instructions. Domineering behavior by anyone, man or woman, would be reprov'd in the church. What must be remembered is that the Holy Spirit was sent to anoint and empower believers in Christ for "works of service." It is that Spirit who fell on men and women on the Day of Pentecost, empowering them to spread the good news of the Kingdom. The work of the Spirit continues today in the Church, granting gifts, which are gender-neutral, to men and women. History testifies to many women who answered the call of God to preach or teach with wonderful results. Under the New Covenant, the Missio Dei will be accomplished by those whom He has appointed and anointed; hence women are very much in place to pastor in the Church. The prophecy of the prophet Joel will be fulfilled in these days, considered by many to be "the last days". The Spirit has been poured out, but what remains to be fully realized is sons and daughters ministering unfettered in the work of the church.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PROJECT DESIGN

#### Overview

This chapter directs attention to the problem of the under-representation of women in pastoral appointments in the COGOP whose membership in North America in general, and the MAR, is predominately female. Through appropriate methodology, I will attempt to analyze this situation in order to formulate a strategy for correction. The focus of this thesis is to increase the appointment of women as pastors, using the MAR as a case study. Over the years since 1923 when the COGOP restarted as a separate entity with approximately 3,000 members, the fortunes of women have gradually improved, as evidenced by some notable missionary appointments from as far back as 1935. This gave COGOP women leaders a national or international profile or exposure. These appointments include:

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| a. Eliza V. Martin, Missionary to Barbados  | 1935 – 1941 |
| b. Mary H. Ryan, Missionary to Montserrat   | 1935 – 1947 |
| c. Rebecca Cisco, Missionary to New Zealand | 1952 – 1955 |

The Church's Global Missions Coordinator is currently Cathy Payne who assumed that position in 2012.

The aspect of the role model is important as anyone moving into new territory or uncharted waters will seek for a marker or model. A review of the church's history reveals no significant imprint of its women ministers and laborers, and it is well attested that there were several women laboring alongside the men in evangelism, church planting, and discipling.

Church historian Adrian Varlack summarizes:

Women were included in the Church's ministry from quite early although their roles and functions were somewhat limited. . . This was on the premise that



women as a whole were not allowed to participate in business decisions of the Church whether local, district, regional, or international based on what is now recognized as a misapplication of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.<sup>1</sup>

He further explains that significant change occurred in 1996 with the removal of restrictions in all aspects of women's ministry. This change, one would assume, should have encouraged an influx of women into pastoral ministry, but in the twenty intervening years, that has not happened in any proportionate numbers. Therefore, this project will seek to explore from the sample of women already in the ministry track, their understanding and aspirations regarding the pastoral office.

One unique position of the COGOP, is their understanding and ruling on the role of the deacon/deaconess:

The study presented at the 89th International Assembly, 1996, affirmed the understandings of elders as passed in two previous Assemblies. In the 18th International Assembly, 1923, it was stated, "We recommend that the general overseer's recommendation, as to making all bishops and deacons elders, be accepted by the Assembly. . ." (*18th Assembly Minutes*, 1923, 24). The 78th Assembly of 1983 concluded: "We recommend that the minimum age for a bishop hereafter be set at age 30" (*78th Assembly Minutes*, 1983, 137).<sup>2</sup>

It seems therefore that the deaconess can be of significant help in the local congregation, based on the duties and responsibilities of the office, but although each local church may have one or more deacons, there are very few deaconesses in the entire region. My survey results reveal one person indicating a ministry call as deaconess in a secondary category but is not serving in that capacity. None of the licensed women in ministry who responded to the survey were deaconesses. The particulars of that position are outlined

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian L. Varlack, *Church of God of Prophecy: Concise History, Polity, Doctrine, and Future, Foundations* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2010), 159.

<sup>2</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Ministry Policy Manual, Church of God of Prophecy* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2014), 94.

hereunder. The position does not require a license and authority and responsibilities are resident in the local church.

A. Deacons/Deaconesses (as applicable)

Both biblical and historical records concerning the activities of deacons confirm they served alongside and in harmony with the bishop or pastor as servants to the congregation. They were assigned responsibilities which contributed to the spiritual and social well-being of the congregation. This office functions to. . .

1. complement the office of the bishop or pastor (Acts 6:1–7);
2. serve more in the temporal needs of God’s work, such as coordinating relief to the poor and needy (Acts 6:1–5);
3. conduct church business affairs and conferences when officially authorized by the pastor or overseer;
4. teach and defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and
5. baptize, and administer the Lord’s supper and the washing of the saints’ feet.

They constitute a vital part of local church government (Philippians 1:1). The qualifications of a deacon are similar to those of a bishop, except for the requirements of age and the teaching and direct oversight of the flock. Their qualifications are taken from the scriptural references of 1 Timothy 3:8–12 and Acts 6:4 (as a prototype). The New Testament account regarding the office and function of deacons/deaconesses give very clear understanding that their activities are generally confined to and carried out in the local congregation. This ministry is local rather than trans-local.<sup>3</sup>

The church membership in the MAR remains predominately female at 65%. The membership growth in North America presents a complex picture. The statistical report as of 2016 for North America records a membership of 93,827. The 2014 report has a membership of 97,268 and the 2010 report sets membership at 92,585. In like manner, the MAR has experienced fluctuations in its numbers with a plateauing in the last two years. This project was designed to glean data and relevant information from the licensed

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<sup>3</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Ministry Policy Manual*, 94-95.

women in ministry and the women already serving as pastors in this region, for the purpose of increasing the participation of women in the missionary work of the church. The ultimate goal is to increase church membership in this region by appointing more qualified women in ministry as pastors.

### **Participants**

The participants are women who have gone through the licensure process of the church which is the same for male and female as outlined below:

No new minister shall be licensed or ordained without first having served a time of apprenticeship with experiences in preaching and ministry under the supervision of a seasoned and experienced minister in the church. In this way, the church will have opportunity to observe and ascertain the candidate's potential for the ministry.

The areas of proof to the local church will include the following:

1. Evidence of the spiritual experiences of justification, sanctification, and baptism with the Holy Ghost in the everyday conduct of life, having been baptized by immersion;
2. Evidence of God's calling;
3. Evidence of aptitudes and abilities by way of positive response to the requirements;
4. Evidence of a beginner's knowledge of the Word of God and of the teachings and practices of the Church;
5. Evidence of consistent and persistent study of the Scriptures;
6. An interest in the general, ongoing program of the Church;
7. Evidence of ability to preach with a dependence on and the unction of the Holy Ghost.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Ministry Policy Manual*, 71-72.

What was also notable at the presentation of “emerging leaders” at the regional convention in July 2017, was the fact that of the thirty-five ministers presented, fifteen were women.

The MAR affords a bite-size sample of the church-wide, a problem but relevant in all aspects. There are forty-two established churches in this region with average membership running at sixty-eight. Seven of these churches are pastored by women, who, as will be evidenced in the interviews, differ in their ministry styles but are similar in their commitment to the Church and to The Lord. The region is divided into five districts with an average of seven churches in each district. The number of licensed female ministers differ in each district with twenty region-wide.

The Vision 2020 Strategy Plan for the COGOP has a strong emphasis on church planting as outlined hereunder which mandates the local churches to move out into the mission field.

We encourage each church around the world to seek to “mother” new churches. Nature teaches us that every healthy cell reproduces. A mothering church is one that is committed to allocating its limited resources to send out and support church planting teams into a new harvest field. . . We must identify and empower those with the gifting for church planting.<sup>5</sup>

With church planting of such significance, the ministry of the evangelist was also analyzed as this is the church office that favorably affects church growth. The missionaries of an earlier era in the COGOP all held an Evangelist license.

### **Research Strategy**

Two instruments were used in the formulation of this case study: a questionnaire for the licensed female ministers and a phone interview with the female pastors. A five-

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<sup>5</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Vision 2020: Organizational Strategic Goals Executive Summary* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2010), 1.

point Likert scale questionnaire was used to explore the women's beliefs, understanding of church polity, emotional stability, aspirations, and educational pursuits. One of the objectives of this project is to determine the "call narrative" resident in the lives of the licensed women who are not yet pastoring, as the interviews with current pastors reveal a clear call to preach the Gospel was present in some cases, and in others, just a willingness to serve in whatever capacity the work of the church required. Also, another objective is to unearth latent fears and presuppositions regarding their prospects of being called to leadership as a pastor in the church. These are areas which are not usually discussed but need to be voiced if a correct assessment is to be reached in seeking to increase the participation of women in leadership positions as pastors in the Church.

This thesis project was introduced in a general session of the Minister's Convention of the MAR held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Delaware. The purpose of the project was stated in that session and the IRB Consent Form was discussed via a power point presentation. Afterward, surveys were distributed to all female licensed ministers present with some taken to deliver to those absent. Thirteen completed questionnaires were returned.

This survey instrument was comprised of three sections. Section one covered demographics, ministry calling, and the call narrative. Section two featured a five-point Likert scale of seven statements as listed hereunder:

1. I believe that women can now hold unrestricted license and full pastoral authority with the exception of the ordaining of elders.
2. There is sound theological foundation pertaining to women as leaders in the church.
3. As a female minister in the COGOP, I am aware of my role, function, and limitations.

4. I function in a climate of appreciation and validation from both male and female members of my local church.
5. I function in a climate of appreciation and validation from the church leadership within my District and Region.
6. I believe that women should **not** be appointed to the office of pastor in the COGOP
7. There is a pressing need for a mentorship program for female ministers launching out as missionaries or pastors.

The third section enquires into the participants' educational and training pursuits in preparation for or enhancement of ministry, and their aspirations of involvement in the work of the church as well.

Phase two of this project was comprised of phone-interviews of approximately forty minutes with four of the seven serving female pastors at a date and time suitable to them. The questions and issues for this interview were emailed to the pastors prior to the interview. The two sections of this interview covered (1) Ministry Calling and (2) The Joy of Ministry. Talking points are listed below:

#### Ministry Calling

1. Do you recall a specific call into the ministry in general or pastoring in particular?
2. Most women in ministry have served in various departments in the church in preparation for a shepherding role. How would you describe your preparation?
3. How did you assume the pastorate?
  1. You started the church consequent to evangelism or missionary outreach.
  2. You were considered the best candidate for the vacancy.
  3. You continued the work after the death of a spouse.
4. The aspect of loneliness is one of the nuances of women in ministry. What coping mechanisms have worked for you?
5. Several of our emerging leaders are young women. Some of them might be appointed to pastor. Do you see a mentorship program as necessary for these women, based on your experience?

6. The region offers various training opportunities. Please indicate the ones you have participated in.

### The Joy of Ministry

1. How would you rate your experience as a pastor, 10 being most fulfilling and 1 being least fulfilling?
2. A recent *Barna* survey of Church of God of Prophecy pastors reveals the following:
  - a. Most pastors start early on their path to ministry.
  - b. Most pastors are faring well, but 1 in 3 is at risk of burnout.
  - c. Worship helps pastors stay resilient.<sup>6</sup>
3. Where do you fit in the above three points? What aspects of pastoring do you enjoy the most?

Preaching/Teaching

Evangelizing/Sharing the Gospel

Developing Other Leaders

Discipling Believers

Pastoral Care

Organizing Church Events/Meetings/Ministries.

4. Do you have a supportive team in church and at home to share the burden of leadership?

Earlier this year the COGOP commissioned a survey of all its pastors in North America, to be done by The Barna Group. Some of the findings in this project are evaluated alongside the Barna results.

### Measuring Instruments

#### Licensed Women Ministers

Numeric values were not given to items on the Likert scale because the qualitative nature of the survey also incorporates narrative responses. The women ranged in age from the 25-45 category to 70+, with the largest number falling in the 45-70 group. This

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<sup>6</sup> David Kinnaman, "The State of Pastors," *Barna Group*, accessed November 2, 2017. <https://www.barna.com/product/stateofpastors/>.

data is important because the current emphasis in this region and church-wide is to attract younger people to pursue ministry. There were no responses in the 18-25 age group. One of the Barna survey findings of pastors revealed:

- Most pastors start early on their path to ministry.
- A sense of calling deepens with time and experience.
- As a cohort of leaders, pastors are getting older.<sup>7</sup>

These women have served as ministers from three to twenty years and have functioned in various capacities, not necessarily in what could be termed their “calling.” With respect to “Ministry Calling” participants were asked to indicate more than one area of interest, and then to list choices as primary, secondary, or other.

The section on training and leadership development comprised a list of training opportunities offered in the region and participants were asked to indicate those they have participated in and their plans for furthering their theological training. This area is relevant because of the church’s quest to provide wholesome training for its leaders, incorporating all the disciplines needed to be effective in leadership. Vision 2020 states:

The Holy Spirit has challenged us to implement effective, comprehensive, long-term formal and informal avenues to train and encourage our ministerial leadership. Under our leadership development umbrella, we will pursue programs that meet the various needs of our leaders, including academic and transformational leadership, as well as curriculum geared toward life-long learning and continuing education.<sup>8</sup>

Many of the women are in the 45-70 age range, who entered the ministry track with very little theological training. This area of enquiry shines some light on the women’s willingness to embark on any required training to enhance their performance in ministry.

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<sup>7</sup> Kinnaman, “The State of Pastors,” *Barna Group*.

<sup>8</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Vision 2020*, 10.



## Female Pastors

The phone-interview with women serving as pastors in the MAR region of the COGOP was designed to tap into the oral history of their journeys with its challenges and victories along the way. The role of women leaders in the Pentecostal tradition has been a subject of much debate and documentation, with an emerging picture of under-appreciation and suppression in the main denominations. The COGOP has been progressive in its recognition of women in leadership roles with its landmark ruling in 1996 which cleared the way for women to function unhindered at the pastoral level. As mentioned before, there has not been a significant up-tick in female pastoral appointments since, so these interviews are designed to gain some insight as to the how and why the female pastor survives or thrives.

The required competencies for pastors in the COGOP are as stated hereunder:

In addition to the general competencies for all ministers, those who serve as pastors should know or be able to do, the following:

1. Develop and model personal spiritual disciplines (e.g. prayer, fasting, meditation, study of the Word, servant-hood, submission, simplicity, confession, etc.).
2. Carry out the biblical principles of shepherding and caring for the spiritual needs of the members and friends of the local church.
3. Understand and utilize a variety of leadership styles appropriate to differing circumstances.
4. Develop and utilize problem-solving skills.
5. Develop and utilize skills in personal counseling and human relations.
6. Exhibit skills in developing the leadership potential of local members.
7. Understand, and be sensitive to, the role of the national/regional/state and international church and their various ministries.
8. Utilize biblical principles and procedures to discipline and restore fallen

(erring) members.

9. Maintain positive intra-church relationships through constant, open, and effective communications with members, fellow-workers, peers, and those responsible for the overall supervision of the churches.

10. Display biblical integrity and ethics in such areas as treatment of others, impartiality, confidentiality, dependability, etc.

11. Understand and practice appropriate standards for the management of church property, facilities, equipment, and technology.

12. Understand and practice sound principles of financial management.

13. Understand and practice sound principles in legal matters.

14. Work with the overseer to initiate and carry out church-planting projects and new-field evangelism.

15. Be familiar with, and be able to use, proper techniques for moderating services and business sessions.

16. Exhibit effective techniques for program/calendar planning, taking into account the various activities of the national/regional/state and international church, the local community, and families.

17. Lead the local church in the process of discipleship and assimilation of new attendees/members.

18. Act with grace and proper ministerial etiquette in every situation that may arise in the congregation, community, and in the home.

19. Conduct personal ministry through visitation of both members and non-members in homes, medical facilities, places of business, etc.

20. Perform with proper dignity the various ministerial duties required on special occasions such as baby dedications, weddings, and funerals.

21. Prepare and preach doctrinally sound and effective sermons based on the Word of God under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

22. Provide visionary leadership by clearly demonstrating God-given anointing and vision for the ministries and future of the local church.

23. Lead the worship life of the local church, in terms of both public, corporate worship, and lifestyle worship.

24. Lead the local church in fulfilling the Great Commission within the local community.
25. Lead the congregation in developing a global worldview of the local church's responsibility in expanding world mission efforts through such activities as sending, giving, and personal support of missionaries.
26. Be aware of, and minister to, the unique needs of families, both his/her own and those within the local congregation.
27. Lead the church in, or provide other leadership for, Bible-based educational activities.
28. Lead the church, when necessary, through the process of change and transformation.
29. Manage the varied demands placed on the spiritual, physical, and emotional resources of a pastor through balanced seasons of personal retreat, restoration, and recreation.
30. Encourage and model the habits of lifelong learning.<sup>9</sup>

As can be seen from the foregoing, the bar is set high and incorporates a complexity of disciplines. Many who have entered the pastorate, both men and women, have done so with a strong call and aptitude to preach, not fully envisioning the other aspects such as discipling, counseling, administration, management, and developing other leaders, to name a few. The Barna Report asked the question, "What areas of ministry do you wish you had been more prepared for?" The aspect with the highest percentage is, Balancing Ministry and Administration.

### **Record of Data**

This analysis was done according to the age-range of the ministers. Difference in response could have been colored by age and experience. The younger women entered

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<sup>9</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Ministry Policy Manual*, 67-69.

ministry during a new era of Pentecostalism while the older ministers were formed and experienced some of the “frontier” culture of the early days.

Table 1: Profile of Licensed Women

Age Range	18-25	25-45	45-70	70+	None
	0	4	5	3	1
Years as a Minister		9	13	20	
		4	10	10	
		3	-	-	
		1.5	-		
Full-Time		2		2	1
Bi-vocational		2	3	1	

A recent Barna Survey of COGOP pastors reveal the median age of 54 years with 17% being 65 and older. The women in ministry fall below the average here even though there are no 18-25’s in the ministry track at this point. It was noticeable that from this small sample of women there were those given to “full time” ministry in the younger and older age groups.

Table 2: Ministry Calling-Pastor

Pastor	Primary	Secondary	Other
25-45	3	Teacher	Women
		Youth	Praise & Worship
		Children	
Women in this group serving in their primary call as pastor (1)			
45-70	1		
None in this group serves as pastor but in the other category			
70+		1	Teacher
			Admin
			Women
None of this group serves as pastor but in the other category			

Table 3: Ministry Calling-Evangelist

<b>Evangelist</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Other</b>
25-45	1	Teacher	Women
Women serving as evangelist in this group (1)			
45-70	2	Prophet	Women
		Pastor	Helps
		Teacher	
Women serving as evangelist in this group (2)			
70+	3	Teacher	Administration
		Pastor	Women
Women serving as evangelist in this group (3)			

Women with an evangelistic calling are fully utilized in the work of the church, and history also records that from this category of ministry, churches are planted. Of the ministers who indicated evangelist as their primary call, they also listed pastor and teacher as secondary callings. The other notable fact is that ministry to women is named in the other category by all age groups. The younger women in the 25-45 group showed little interest in the evangelist ministry even though the call of pastor registered as primary with more of them.

The responses to the Likert scale proved to be very informative with reference to the ministers' understanding of the church's teaching and policy regarding women in ministry. Also, the confidence gleaned from sound theological undergirding is evident in this survey. The number of responses to each statement is recorded.

Table 4: Likert Assessment

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. I believe that women can now hold unrestricted license and full pastoral authority with the exception of the ordaining of elders.	5	6	-	2	-
2. There is sound theological foundation pertaining to women as leaders in the church.	3	9	1	-	-
3. As a female minister in the COGOP, I am aware of my role, function, and limitations.	6	5	1	-	1
4. I function in a climate of appreciation and validation from both male and female members of my local church.	4	6	1	2	-
5. I function in a climate of appreciation and validation from the church leadership within my District and Region.	2	9	1	1	-
6. I believe that women should <b>not</b> be appointed to the office of pastor in the COGOP.	-	-	1	5	7
7. There is a pressing need for a mentorship program for female ministers launching out as missionaries or pastors.	5	6	2	-	-

### Leadership Development and Training

The women in ministry in this region have participated in the training provided to a satisfactory extent. The two required disciplines are shown hereunder and are separated by age group. The first is the *School of Practical and Advanced Studies* (SOPAS) which is comprised of three levels of teaching. This is a church sponsored study and covers COGOP polity. The second is the *Foundation for Ministry* discipline, comprised of four courses covering a wider range of subjects. There is also theological training offered by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary presented in the form of a four-day (36 hours)

intensive classroom instruction, accompanied by preparatory reading and un-supervised course work.

Table 5: Training Participation

	25-45	45-70	70+
SOPAS	2	4	3
Foundations for Ministry	3	4	3

### Interview of Pastors

Four ministers serving as pastors were interviewed with very interesting narratives and experiences. A synopsis of each interview is presented hereunder. Each interview covered the same areas of ministry and these responses will be evaluated against the Barna findings of COGOP pastors in North America.

#### **Pastor A**

This minister is African American and sensed a call to ministry in her twenties. She does not recall a specific call to pastoring in particular, but rather to evangelism, which she was involved in, as well as fostering care groups, children's ministry, women's ministry, and administration. In 2000, she was asked to pastor a church some distance from her home involving a commute of approximately ninety minutes one way. The church currently has forty-three members with 60% women. Her mother was a pastor and several family members are involved in ministry in Maryland.

Strength and encouragement are gleaned from networking with other women in ministry, not necessarily from the COGOP, thereby not succumbing to the nuance of loneliness. This pastor fully recommends a mentoring program for the emerging female

ministers in this region for the following reasons: (1) it could be beneficial; (2) when a woman assumes the pastorate, it is different from the male pastor; (3) women are not as welcomed, and they need more encouragement and support; (4) the influence of culture is always present.

This pastor has fully participated in the leadership training provided by the Region and has enrolled in a Bible College to pursue an associate degree in theology. This endeavor highlights a loophole in the church's program which covers subjects such as Spiritual Formation, History and Polity of the COGOP, History of Christianity, and Introduction to the Bible. The seminary of record, which provides theological training, commences at the Bachelor's level and many of our ministers are intimidated or unprepared to start at that level.

The joy of ministry for this pastor was a reality as seen in her experience rated as being 9 out of 10, with 10 representing 'most fulfilling.' A recent Barna Survey of COGOP pastors reveal a risk of burnout ratio of 1 in 3, but this pastor was at no such risk because she has adequate help and finds strength and resilience in worship. When asked about the aspects of pastoring which were most enjoyable, many of the aspects named were given a 10. Those aspects were preaching/teaching, evangelizing/sharing the Gospel, developing other leaders, discipling believers, and pastoral care. The one area of non-interest was organizing church events/meetings/ministries.

### **Pastor B**

This pastor was called to ministry as a teenager in Kentucky. She is now 88 years of age, Caucasian, and started serving in the local church as a youth director; she conducted prayer meetings and bible study and, as she puts it, "pastored without a



license.” In 1951, she and her husband moved to Baltimore, Maryland where they started and pastored a church. Her preparation for ministry in the early days was “just being Spirit led” one day at a time. There was no formal training in those days.

On the death of her husband, she assumed the pastorate in Baltimore East Side and in 1980 she moved to a suburb in Maryland where she started a church with one family in attendance. She relates that a vacant building became available across from her home, so she bought the facility which now houses the local church. The membership is presently seventeen, and is comprised of thirteen women and four men.

When asked about the aspect of loneliness, she enthusiastically responded that she is never lonely. She enjoys people, she is a giver and is always reaching out. Based on her experience as a female pastor, she offered some guidelines for women coming into church leadership:

1. Every individual is different.
2. Be consecrated to God. His plans are the ones we are working for.
3. When not accepted by men in ministry, find other avenues such as Nursing Homes, Prisons, which are some places she has ministered.
4. The key is to stay in God’s calling and anointing.

The leadership training offered in the early period of the COGOP is what this pastor has done, along with the current SOPAS courses. She is concerned about efforts to build God’s church by “man’s programs,” further stating that church is not about numbers or money.

The question on fulfillment in ministry was answered with a 10, defined as most fulfilling, because she is always busy reaching, touching, and ministering to people. The risk of burnout is non-existent in her sphere, but there is concern about communication from the national and regional leadership disseminating to the local pastors and churches.

This might be due in part to the fact that she does not own or use a computer. She has embraced all areas of pastoring with good support from church members, volunteers, and family. She has a son and a daughter with whom she prays every day at 6 a.m.

### **Pastor C**

This pastor felt the call of God to ministry at twenty-eight years of age. This was not a call to pastor but to evangelize. She visited nursing homes and women's prisons. She currently serves as Regional Evangelist and confirms that this is her calling. Along the way, she served in several departments of the church in positions such as Youth Leader, and Children's Church Director as well as in other auxiliary leadership. Also, knowing her ministry call is to evangelize, she read books on evangelism and whatever would benefit her in her calling.

This evangelist assumed the pastorate as an emergency measure when her local church was threatened with closure because of lack of leadership. She remained as pastor for three years by which time the situation had improved. Her tenure as pastor added valuable insight to her ministry as she resumed her evangelist duties. When asked about loneliness as a woman in leadership she offered the following advice:

1. Have a prayer life. There are too many hurting people.
2. No time to be lonely if you are always reaching out.
3. When one is appointed, it distances you from the people; God's grace is needed to take you through.

This pastor has participated in all the training offered by the region and is currently a student at the Theological Seminary. Her fulfillment ratio with regards to pastoring is placed at 8. It is an experience she has found to be very rewarding and she totally enjoyed it. There is no risk of burnout as her prayer life recharges her and wholesome worship strengthens and undergirds her. One item of note with regards to

worship is that it is important for leaders to participate in the worship life of the church to set an example for congregants.

The aspects of pastoring she enjoyed most are preaching/teaching, evangelizing, developing leaders, and discipling believers. Pastoral care and organizing church activity were areas that are not as fulfilling. The local church currently has sixty-nine members with women comprising 75%. The prayers and support of other evangelists as well as family members have been valuable emotional resources for this minister.

### **Pastor D**

This pastor was saved at twenty-eight, at which time she told the Lord she will serve him. Also present in her life was a call to preach and a desire to teach young people, so she started a Sunday School. She was born in Jamaica and later migrated to the United States of America. The unction to preach was so strong that she found herself preaching to herself in the bathroom. In the local church in New Jersey where she fellowshiped, her call and gifting were not recognized at first. She, however, continued to teach Sunday School and did visitation in homes and other places. The pastor was asked by another leader to mentor her after observing her for a while. She was then allowed to accompany the pastor to preaching events.

About this juncture in her life, the Lord showed her a vision in 1993. “The Holy Spirit picked me up and put me in a pasture and placed a Bible in my hand. I saw the Apostles and heard the voice of God saying, ‘My name shall be glorified in you. Go with what is in your hand.’”

The call to pastor came by invitation to preach at another church where the new pastor had gotten married, and being the only licensed minister in the church, she was

asked to go. The commute was ninety minutes one way, and when she arrived, the membership totaled four. When the offer to pastor that church was made she accepted with the prayer, “Lord if you go with me, I will go.” Her husband also was a source of encouragement. That church has grown under her leadership from four to presently 200, 66% of whom are women.

This pastor has devised varied coping mechanisms with regards to loneliness:

1. Fellowships with a small group of other ministers, men and women with whom she shares the burden of the work.
2. There is also another group of brethren with whom she comes together to fast and pray.
3. On the Monday after fasting, there is fellowship with the sisters.

On the question of mentorship for the emerging female ministers, this pastor was convinced of its necessity. The following are some of her comments: “The women need guidance. When a woman is called, they do not know how to express themselves. There should be workshops or seminars for emerging women in leadership. Listen to them and teach them. Senior women in ministry should encourage and guide. Women are repressed.” She also expressed the perception that the senior female ministers are not usually asked to make contributions in ministry matters, locally and regionally. Hence the feeling of being left behind.

This pastor’s embrace of theological training opportunities is exemplary as she has completed all the courses offered and is enrolled in Gordon-Conwell consortium. Busy as she is, when asked about her fulfillment in ministry, her rating was nine. There is no risk of burnout at this time as she has a good support system and enjoys the worship experience privately and corporately. Her desire is to set a standard to be present in all events. Not in-charge, but in support.

The aspects of pastoring she most enjoyed are preaching/teaching with evangelizing, followed closely by developing other leaders. Pastoral care and organizing church events are less enjoyable but she did say there was a professional counselor in the local church.

### **Summary**

The licensed ministers and pastors who participated were obviously interested in the idea of the survey as this is the first time in the existence of the region that such a survey was undertaken. There was also an expressed need for their voices to be heard even though it was in a limited way. The investigator was particularly impressed with the transparency and openness as expressed in some responses, which seemed to hint at the need for some help or intervention. The interview of pastors provided a glimpse into the complexity of the position and how these women configured their ministry within their particular context.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### OUTCOME

#### Review

The Church of God of Prophecy possesses a rich heritage in its history, dating back to 1896. Remarkable leaders, epic events and episodes along the way provided unique stamina and vision for this expression of the Body of Christ. As a Pentecostal denomination from 1907, new challenges were encountered, and in response to new paradigms, the Church's message has been to walk in the light to the best of its knowledge and ability, taking the New Testament as its guide for doctrine, discipline, and practice. This philosophy created the platform for several significant changes in doctrine and ecclesiology. Chapter one covers some of the landmark changes such as the rejection of the belief of exclusivity, the acceptance of divorced persons, without stigma, even though remarried, if the divorce occurred under specified circumstances.<sup>1</sup> Another frontier was reached in 1996 which removed most restrictions on women in ministry. With the church's vision readjusted to the harvest in 1994, this realignment set a new course for the church nationally and internationally.

Other Pentecostal and Evangelical groups of that era also sought to establish a place on the religious landscape. Three of those groups, the Assemblies of God (AG) and the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) and the Church of God (Cleveland), were alluded to in earlier chapters as a plumb line to measure the progress or lack thereof of the COGOP. The governance of each of these organizations differ in significant ways. The AG adopted a congregational form, the COGIC has an apostolic style, and the COG

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<sup>1</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Ministry Policy Manual, Church of God of Prophecy* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2014), 178-179.

(Cleveland) as well as the COGOP are hierarchical with an episcopal polity. Walking in the light has characterized this church, as it has been progressive in many areas where correction was needed, and today, women in ministry have unhindered access to leadership in the church.

The other defining aspect of the COGOP is that it has remained relatively numerically small in membership as an organization, compared to the other Pentecostal entities emerging at that time. A major cause of this was corrected with the rejection of the doctrine of exclusivity as mentioned in chapter one but meaningful growth in numbers still seems elusive. Many initiatives have been implemented with the goal to grow the church. In 1984 the theme “Turning to the Harvest” was implemented and in 2010 the vision for 2020 was introduced with sound, practical recommendations to influence church health, growth and expansion.

The literature review covered the journey of women through different eras in church history with the aim of showing the contributions of women in the work of the church. The Pentecostal era gave rise to several Spirit-empowered female preachers across the United States; some of them even founded denominations which grew into significant churches. Writers such as Estrela Alexander and Kimberly Alexander have spearheaded an awareness movement with regards to the plight of women seeking to serve in the pastoral and other leadership positions in Pentecostal churches. As attested by the theological research, there is no sustaining scriptural basis for this exclusion but the debate and struggle remain.

In the theological foundation, the same approach was used to trace the welfare of women from the Jewish community and culture through to the early church. Pivotal

passages of scripture were examined which have direct bearing on the acceptance or rejection of women in public ministry and church leadership. The writings of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians and 1 Timothy framed the main arguments with the prophetic utterance of Joel, as fulfilled in Acts chapter 2. This provided the underpinning and added some clarity to the conclusion of Peter in Acts 10:34-35, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right."

This project considered the problem of the under-utilization of women in leadership in the church and how church growth can be impacted by appointing more women as pastors in the COGOP. The MAR region was used as the case study with participants from licensed female ministers and serving female pastors. What was envisioned in this undertaking was to discover the voice of women in ministry, enquire into the understanding of their calling or in what direction the Holy Spirit is leading, what obstacles are perceived to be present, and what preparations are in place to facilitate the successful accomplishment of ministry assignments.

### **Analysis of Results**

In this analysis, an evaluation of the Tables 1 to 5 will be done and a comparison with published data, particularly from the Barna Survey of GOGOP pastors published in 2017, and J. Robert Clinton's book, *The Making of a Leader*, 2012.

Table 1: Profile of Licensed Women

#### **Years as a Minister:**

Years as a minister would incorporate the lay and licensed period of ministry. Even though there are no 18-25's recorded, they most likely will be in the next group, as a call to ministry is resident in individuals at an early age, although maybe not clearly



defined with regards to aspect. Studies show that a sense of calling deepens with time and experience, so it is reasonable to say that seedbeds are resident in the 18-25 group which will blossom in the older categories. Using Clinton's Leadership Emergence Theory, these ladies may be at the Phase 1 stage as explained hereunder:

In Phase 1, God providentially works foundational items into the life of the leader-to-be. Personality characteristics, both good and bad experiences, and the time context will be used by God. The building blocks are there, though the structure being built may not be clearly in focus. Character traits are embedded. The same traits in mature form will be adapted and used by God. Many times the personality traits later will be seen to correlate with the spiritual gift-mix that God gives. A retrospective view during the convergence stage makes it easier to clarify just how the foundational issues correlate with mature leadership. Usually the boundary condition between Phase 1 and Phase 11 is the conversion experience (or an all-out, surrender commitment) in which the would-be leader aspires to spend a lifetime that counts for God.<sup>2</sup>

Three of the pastors interviewed stated that their call to ministry came in their mid-twenties. One pastor started as a teenager to evangelize and work with youth groups.

### **Fulltime/Bi-vocational**

Findings from the Barna Survey reveal that "49% of COGOP pastors are able to make ends meet and have some left over. Also, another 10% have more than needed for self and family."<sup>3</sup> Responses to the question of fulltime ministry reveal that two of the 70+ ministers were fulltime and serving as evangelists. Also two of the 25-45 group were fulltime, one serving as an evangelist and the other as a pastor. It is therefore assumed that the aspect of financial support is not a significant factor in women seeking to lead or pastor churches. The bi-vocational minister is sometimes at a disadvantage because

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<sup>2</sup> J Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development*, revised edition (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 26-27.

<sup>3</sup> David Kinnaman, "The State of Pastors," *Barna Group*, accessed November 2, 2017. <http://www.barna.com/product/stateofpastors/>.

having to retain a secular job takes time and energy away from ministry. The church is ultimately affected. Being adequately supported in ministry testifies to a viable entity.

Table 2: Ministry Calling-Pastor

### **Primary**

Knowing what it is God is calling you to do and to be is crucial to fulfilling and finding your place in His church. This question was asked in order to gain some insight into what the women were thinking in relation to their perceived ministry and assigned function. They are already in ministry and Clinton touches on salient points in the process. Convergence meaning, the elements of giftedness, roles and influence:

In Convergence, God moves the leader into a role that matches his gift-mix and experience so that ministry is maximized. The leader uses the best he has to offer and is freed from ministry for which he is not gifted or suited. Life Maturing and Ministry Maturing peak together during this period.

Many leaders do not experience convergence, and there are various reasons for this. Sometimes they are hindered by their own lack of personal development. At other times, an organization may hinder a leader by keeping him in a limiting position.<sup>4</sup>

Three of the 25-45s indicated pastor as a primary call of which one is serving as a senior pastor, who was also a youth pastor. In the other two groups, pastor is listed as a secondary calling. In the 45-70 category, the ministry of teacher is prominent, being listed either as primary or secondary. The Sunday School, Cell Groups, and Bible Studies are primarily the responsibility of the women in most churches. In the 70+ group, teacher is also indicated as primary and secondary.

From this data, there seems to be a slight disconnect between what the women think they are called to do, and where they actually function. This can be attributed to

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<sup>4</sup> Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, 39.

what Clinton terms as ‘lack of personal development’ or ‘limitations placed by an organization.’

### Table 3: Ministry Calling-Evangelist

There seem to be a different dynamic at play in this analysis of the evangelistic call. The three ministers in the 70+ group all indicate evangelist as a primary calling and pastor/teacher/prophet as secondary. Ministry to women is mentioned by all groups in the other category. The older women are treading the traditional track of the women preachers, who were designated evangelists, and received widespread acceptance in Pentecostal circles. These are also the women who history records as starting churches and even denominations as a result of their ministry. Alexander mentions some inconvenient truths which have occurred over the years, but I cannot attest to as part of the MAR’s reality:

In some Pentecostal denominations, women who sought pastoral placements encountered another un-official limitation. Leaders willingly allowed them to “dig out” or plant new congregations and nurture them to the point of viability. They also encouraged them to take on congregations that were at the point of failing and to use their gifts for preaching, evangelism, and administration to rebuild them to viability. Once these congregations had grown to the point that they could economically sustain the salary of a full-time pastor, the woman would be replaced with a new male pastor. . . Over several decades, a woman might start or renew several congregations in this manner, but would never be allowed to take any of them past the point of viability.<sup>5</sup>

In response to the foregoing I would add that some of these women understand their call by God is to evangelize and win souls, not necessarily to lead or pastor churches. What would seem like an unfavorable practice to us might not be so to the minister. She is satisfied to be involved in a meaningful way by using the gifts and

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<sup>5</sup> Estrela Alexander, *Princeton Theological Monograph Series*, Estrela Alexander and Amos Yong ed., vol. 104, *Philip's Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009), L 174, Kindle.

anointing God has given her to benefit the Kingdom. One pastor who was interviewed stated that she took the job to avert the church being closed, because a pastor could not be found. This person pastored for three years after which a male pastor was set in place. In her case, she was encouraged that she was able to help in a time of crisis and was happy to return to her primary call and passion, to evangelize.

In every age category, the women who indicated evangelist as a primary calling are all serving as an evangelist with pastor/teacher as a secondary calling. One response to this survey listed pastor as a primary calling but unlike the others, does not indicate evangelist as a call in any category.

Table 4: Likert Scale

#### **Unrestricted Licensed**

There were thirteen responses and the general consensus is that the women were aware of the 1996 ruling. One of the concerns of this investigator was that decisions made at the polity level of the church were not effectively disseminated to the local church level with the congregation being well informed. The two ministers who disagreed with the statement were both licensed for over ten years, one in the 45-70 group and the other in the 70+ group. Both are active in ministry functioning in the areas of evangelist, teacher, pastor, women's ministry and administration. This aspect indicates that there is more work to be done as the ministerial roles of these women influence others. Also, they could be operating in a cultural context which is slow to embrace change. There were no questions in this survey regarding the impact of traditions in particular cultural situations. Therefore it would be difficult to measure the force of cultural traditions.

**Sound Theological Foundation/Role, Function, and Limitations.**

All respondents, except one neutral, agreed on this statement. This general agreement stems in part from the teaching and training undergone in the licensure process. Some limitations remain with regards to women leaders, but the women indicate their awareness of what is allowed in their particular context. Cultural aspect also colors some situations as most of the churches in the MAR are predominately of one ethnic group. Ten of the forty-two churches are Caucasian and three are multi-cultural. The others are predominately African American, Caribbean or African.

**Climate of Appreciation and Validation.**

The appreciation and validation received by any minister is influenced by their personalities and mannerisms. This should not be a judgment on the minister's performance in ministry but rather on their people-skills. Also, a minister might still be in the Developmental Phase of Leadership. "As a leader, you should recognize that God is continually developing you over a lifetime. His top priority is to conform you to the image of Christ for ministry and spiritual authority. . .In addition to transforming your character, God will increase your capacity to influence through developing your spiritual gifts."<sup>6</sup>

**Need Mentors.**

There was general agreement on this need in the lives of women in ministry in the MAR. Much more is outlined and proposed in the recommendations section. "For the Christian community that aims to foster the growth and development of the next generation of leaders, there is a need to strategically connect with other Christians who have either reached senior positions or positions of influence in their context.

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<sup>6</sup> Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, 45.

### Table 5: Training Participation

The three oldest respondents, 70+, completed all the basic training available but not the higher seminary training. In the 45-70 group, four have completed all required training and two have enrolled in seminary classes. In the 25-45 group the participation is good, including two enrollees in seminary. One minister whose primary call is marked as pastor and who serves in praise & worship, youth and children ministries, has done the minimum of the courses. This individual also reports a neural on the question of appreciation and validation from other members of the local church. Clinton comments on this area of conflict:

Conflict in ministry requires discernment skills. What is from God and what is not? Conflict can arise from different approaches to ministry as well as from personality clashes. Learning to relate in a godly manner in the midst of conflict is closely intertwined with learning to discern the spiritual principles governing ministry. This area of spiritual discernment is difficult for many leaders to learn, but it is crucial because healthy relationships are essential to effective ministry.<sup>7</sup>

The women ministers of the MAR region are satisfactorily engaged in the educational program of the region; therefore, this area should not pose as a hindrance to their appointment to leadership as pastors.

### Interview of Pastors

Three serving pastors and one former pastor were interviewed for this project thereby providing a rich and colorful mosaic of service and commitment to the Lord and to the Church of which they are called to be leaders. A summation of their comments and relevant deductions are outlined hereunder.

1. The 'Joy of Ministry' is a reality in the lives of these ministers. They find great fulfillment and satisfaction in the work they do, primarily because of their love of people.

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<sup>7</sup> Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, 69.

Barna reports a burnout risk of one in three of COGOP pastors, but none of these women intimated such a risk. The oldest of these pastors is eighty-eight years of age and started preaching at age sixteen.

2. Their call to serve started in difficult circumstances, stepping into situations others had shunned, and despite the obstacles, were able to turn the situations around, resulting in a growing church. The problem of male membership in churches pastored by women is not evident in two of the churches with the other two comprising of 75% female membership. This hurdle is still present and is reinforced by cultural stereotyping.

3. One of the reasons for their resilience in the complexity of pastoring is their efforts at investing in their own spiritual development. This is a difficult area of a pastor's life as the Barna survey reveals that 40% find spiritual development difficult, with another 7% finding it very difficult. Women have the natural ability to reach out, hence the presence of support groups in fasting, prayer, and fellowship. Three of the pastors found strength and encouragement through networking with other female ministers on a regular basis.

4. The importance and support of family members is notable among these pastors. Barna finds that families usually weather the challenges of ministry, but an examination of the contributing factors reveals that, "A ministry's negative impact on the family is connected with lower ministry satisfaction and burnout risk."<sup>8</sup> Based on the systems these pastors have put in place, this risk is significantly reduced.

5. The confidence to serve has been enhanced by their participation in the training programs offered in the region as well as seminary classes. These pastors have very

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<sup>8</sup> Kinnaman, "The State of Pastors," *Barna Group*.

inspiring narratives which could be an asset to the emerging female ministers. Their presence is the seed from which other plantings could germinate.

### **Reflection**

There seems to be a change in the paradigm of the pioneering women preachers of days gone by. These were portraits of women with a fire shut up in their bones who found a way to preach the Gospel and save some souls. Even denominational constraints did not stop them, and the history of their achievements inform us even today. The current woman preacher is somewhat of a different mold. The new model before us, starting from the Aimee McPherson era, is a mixture of holy and glory. The frontier pioneer laboring in adverse conditions and enduring unmentionable circumstances is gone, and the younger women in the ministry track of our churches are looking at a new model of the female minister. The television culture of our time has simplified and plastered over the true character of godly service and there is difficulty defining the boundaries of reality and fiction. The influence of the media should be tempered by real life examples of women ministering in our culture and context, seen and observed by others in order to establish balance.

Early Pentecostalism provided a wealth of pioneering women such as Phoebe Palmer, Emma Cotton, Ida Robinson, Lucy Turner and others, but what is noticeable is the scarcity of such passion and formidable commitment closer to our time. There is a propagation of cheap grace and painless pursuits of the things of God, which affects both men and women in ministry. The women under review are bombarded on every side by pseudo images of the call, with not enough reinforcement of real commitment.

The COGOP is seeking and working assiduously at achieving God's purpose in the church. They have changed and corrected positions over the years and have



implemented programs as the current 2020 vision, geared towards church-planting and building healthy churches. The time to break-out and break-through to God's purpose is exemplified by Moses' experience in Exodus:

Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied. The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground." Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. Then the LORD said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. "This," said the LORD, "is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has appeared to you." (Exod. 4:2-5)

The Lord's assignment was accommodative to, and initiated by, what Moses had in his hand. The church's mission is already provided for in terms of needed resources. This analogy is reinforced in 2 Kings; here again the question is asked "what do you have in the house."

The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves." Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?" "Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a small jar of olive oil." Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side." She left him and shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one." But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing. She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left." (2 Ki. 4:1-7)

The miracle of victory and increase depended upon what was already in the possession of the servants of God. The COGOP needs to take another look at what is in hand, and in the house, and earnestly enquire of the Lord for instructions to transform this resource into the success the mission of God requires. Female ministers are a dynamic

force in any church. The nurturing element of the female personality and character can translate into very effective pastoral material.

The words of Longfellow's *Psalm of Life* remind us of the benefits of footprints. I have already mentioned the absence of women of record in the annals of this church, but what was discovered through interviews with some of the serving pastors, were women with remarkable narratives and inspiring insights, which would serve well to motivate and reorient our upcoming female leaders. These women need to be equipped to understand that the task of soul-winning is God's assignment, and what we do as fellow laborers with the help of the Holy Spirit, is unto Him. Working with that reality would color our manner and motives in ministry. What I observe as lacking in the younger group, is that drive to break new ground or go the extra mile, not counting the cost. Those were the hallmarks of the Holy Ghost women preachers of the past and I believe the same level of commitment is required today.

### **Recommendations**

The MAR is representative of a healthy diversity in ethnos and cultures. The respondents to the survey and interviews give some indication of this but in reviewing the responses, very little can be attributed to either ethnicity or cultural leaning.

Based on the results of this project, there are some recommendations I will propose in an effort to formulate a strategy for the advancement of women in ministry in the COGOP at large, and the MAR in particular. The ultimate goal is to utilize more of them as pastors in an effort to positively impact the growth of the church. The words of Clifton & Grey set the tone of this section as they articulate an attribute unique to women and that is absolutely essential for the incarnational aspect of leadership and pastoring: "Common characteristics ascribed more strongly to women than men include welfare

concern for others, compassion, affection, nurture, gentleness, being helpful, sympathetic and kind.”<sup>9</sup> The question is then asked how can these qualities be reconciled to strong leadership. The church cannot measure success using the world’s standards. The principles of the Kingdom of God are contrary to that of the world. Presently we have church organizations fashioned after the corporate model and they function accordingly. What is needed is a new paradigm on shepherding, in The Church of God, emphasizing the incarnational aspect, as “He became flesh and dwelt among us.”

Four areas will be highlighted in these recommendations; these are by no means all that need to be done, but this is a work in progress and much more study and research are needed. The first focus will be on the local church and their validation of the ministering women in their midst. The second will be the recognition of those emerging into ministry among the younger women. The third involves provision of appropriate training for these women and lastly, a mentoring ministry as an integral part of church life.

### Ministers in The House

“Both the female and male elements of being are crucial in understanding the meaning of being made in the image of God. God is large enough and mysterious enough to contain both masculine and feminine identities without having to define these identities too tightly.”<sup>10</sup> An assembly which is egalitarian in their treatment of both sexes in ministry will project wholeness and encourage those who are inclined to enter the

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<sup>9</sup> Jennie Bickmore-Brand & Claire Madden, “Mentoring Women,” in *Raising Women Leaders: Perspectives on Liberating Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Contexts*, Shane Clifton and Jacqueline Grey ed. (Chester Hill, NSW: Australasian Pentecostal Studies, 2009), 276.

<sup>10</sup> Cheryl Bridges Johns, “Spirited Vestments: Or, Why the Anointing is not Enough,” in *Phillip’s Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series Book 104, Estrela Alexander and Amos Yong ed. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers), L 4037, Kindle.

ministry track. The local church is the pivotal point of church growth as outlined in their 2020 vision statement: “Our first priority must be the strengthening and equipping each local church to inspire every member to be an enthusiastic soul-winner. Jesus commanded that we go and teach all nations, but he does not require that we go alone. He promised He would go with us! Armed with this assurance, we can boldly set out to win the world.”<sup>11</sup> The assurance of the Lord’s help is present in serving ministers in general but, the confidence of unbiased support from fellow ministers and congregants is also absolutely necessary.

### Joel is Now

“The prophet Joel tells us that a hallmark of the last days will be an outpouring of the Spirit of God on sons and daughters, young men and women. . .Discerning the times and knowing the need for anointed ministers is great throughout the world. Let us be intentional about implementing a systemic process for equipping and setting forth those whom God has called, even while they are young.”<sup>12</sup>

Emerging ministry in our daughters need to be seriously assessed, and the individuals channeled appropriately. Anointed women with an evangelistic calling should be given every opportunity to mature in that calling along with male counterparts. Women of the local church serve faithfully in the Sunday School, Worship Teams, Hospitality and Visitation Ministries to name a few. Deacons are considered elders in the local church along with the bishops and the pastor. Having more women function as deaconesses will provide some inspiration and encouragement to other women. For this office, no license is required even though in the local church, its influence is significant. The prophesying or preaching aspect of Joel’s prophecy can be accommodated with more of our emerging female ministers being allowed to speak as the Spirit leads in the

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<sup>11</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Vision 2020: Organizational Strategic Goals Executive Summary*. (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House 2010), 3.

<sup>12</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Vision 2020*, 6.

assemblies as well as encouraged and trained in the evangelistic aspect. The difficulty women face in this type of ministry stems from traditional suppositions which are not easily changed in a church with predominantly older members.

### Education

In the 2020 vision statement, the essence of the educational thrust is captured:

Discern, identify, equip and deploy called, anointed, gifted leaders. Regardless of where a person is on their journey, streams of leadership development are available at every level within the Church of God of Prophecy. We must identify those who gave a calling and equip them to fulfill it. We must be vigilant in developing those whom God has gifted, anointed, and called so that they can be made ready to serve in their place in the body.

Upgrade and raise the standard of ministry and leadership development at every level of leadership, leaving none behind. Education is a life-long experience. We have a unique opportunity in the Church of God of Prophecy to offer a wealth of knowledge while instilling in people a desire to grow in the deeper things of the Spirit. Knowledge alone can be detrimental, for the Scripture says it “puffs up.” But coupled with love, God’s very nature, a person can be built up or edified. We must continue to pour into current and emerging leaders in the most effective ways.<sup>13</sup>

There is much hope for women in ministry, in this vision as it unfolds towards the year 2020. The hope is that “none will be left behind” in this last-days push toward the harvest of souls. There are women who are called, anointed and gifted to be effective leaders, including pastoral leadership. The educational aspect is needed to infuse the confidence necessary to successfully accomplish the work. The realization of this portion of the Church’s vision in its fullness will give a quantum leap to the struggle of women to move forward in representative numbers in the leadership of local churches as pastors and other positions.

Education can take place in various forms and levels, hence a prime opportunity for enlightenment and empowerment for ministry could be the annual Women’s Retreats.

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<sup>13</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Vision 2020*, 8.

In this environment women of all ages can be influenced by new paradigms to enrich their understanding and expand their horizons in the area of women in leadership.

### Mentorship

Precedents are essential to the affirmation of women moving into new territory or engaging in ground-breaking ventures. The stories of COGOP women pioneers can mainly be accessed orally as the exploits of these women were complementary to the activities of the men:

Oral history helps to bring to the fore individuals and groups who otherwise might be left out of the historical record because there are few written documents related to their lives. Regrettably the lives and work of women have often been considered secondary to that of men within many of society's leading institutions, so that women's work is often absent from the public record. Janice Dilg has written regarding oral history and women's studies, "oral history remains an essential methodology that moves women out of obscurity, past the peripheral position they have often been relegated to, and situates them more centrally in the historical record where they belong."<sup>14</sup>

In the Church of God of Prophecy there is not much written about the women ministers in our history, not because they did nothing worth mentioning, but because what they did was not recorded. Interviews of the serving female pastors reveal the presence of strong, committed visionaries serving in obscurity, who have inspiring stories and whose input is needed in molding the upcoming female ministers in our midst.

The Church's vision for 2020 "Encourages mentoring relationships across all levels of ministry."<sup>15</sup> This aspect is critical to the well-being of emerging female ministers and pastors because of systemic deficiencies. "The most effective mentoring relationships typically arise naturally among individuals who share important similarities,

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<sup>14</sup> David G. Roebuck, "Hearing Women's Voices in a Classical Pentecostal Denomination," in *Philip's Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series Book 104, Estrela Alexander and Amos Yong ed. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers), L 863, Kindle.

<sup>15</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Vision 2020*, 8.

such as sex, race, ethnicity, background, and interests. This presents a problem when organizations have too few women in leadership positions to aid all those seeking assistance.”<sup>16</sup> What can be done as we move forward is also alluded to in the vision as, “partnering with those who exalt the name of Christ.”<sup>17</sup> In the past, there has not been much outreach to other churches from different denominations. The Barna survey of COGOP pastors asked the question, “How often do you partner with other local churches, regardless of denomination?”. The answer is as follows:

4%	Weekly
7%	Monthly
23%	Several times a year. <sup>18</sup>
24%	A few times a year
14%	At least once a year
22%	Less often
8%	Never.

The Church’s past belief in exclusivity may still be a contributing factor to this situation. For the benefit of our women in ministry, there needs to be more Kingdom partners from which suitable mentors may emerge. The women already serving as pastors could be the vanguard for this project in the MAR. This is a multi-cultural region with pastors representing this diversity, as such; the necessary elements are in place with availability being the only unknown. The impact of precedent is unquestioned in relation to pioneering women preachers. In commenting on the dynamism of the early Wesleyan/Holiness women, Susie C. Stanley offers this insight: “Their ministries were crucial also as a model for other Pentecostal women . . . Without the precedent provided

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<sup>16</sup> Clifton and Grey, *Raising Women Leaders*, 268.

<sup>17</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Vision 2020*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Kinnaman, *The State of Pastors: Barna Group*,

by Wesleyan/Holiness women . . . the number of Pentecostal women preachers would undoubtedly have been smaller.”<sup>19</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In concluding this thesis and project, I am thankful to the Holy Spirit for the unction to see, listen and write. The Mid-Atlantic Region provided the landscape for examination of the documented and empirical realities which have affected church growth, and which motivated this investigator to enquire further. The significant presence of women in the church, their contribution and work in all departments provide the scaffolding for the smooth working and function of the churches. A further look also revealed that comparatively few of them were in elder/leader positions and fewer still were pastors.

Church growth is the heart-beat of this region as well as the entire COGOP at this time. This is the leading of the Lord for the work of the end-time harvest; therefore, this thesis sought to explore the utilization of the resources that God has placed in the Church for its maximum potential. The MAR is well-poised to breakthrough in this area as of the forty-two churches in this region, seven are already pastored by women.

More research is definitely needed for a well-balanced resolution of cause and effect. There are women who are called and anointed to lead churches but who look around and observe a system designed for and dominated by male leaders. The path of least resistance seems to be that of the evangelist which is also an opportunity for women to make the greatest contribution in the program of the church. Also, from this stream of

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<sup>19</sup> Susie C. Stanley, “Wesleyan/Holiness and Pentecostal Women Preachers,” in *Philip's Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series Book 104, Estrela Alexander and Amos Yong ed. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers), L 623, Kindle.



ministry, many pastors are drawn. The footprints of women preachers seem to precede the footprints of women pastors. Because of their ministry style, women are naturally endowed to be incarnational in practice as required for successful evangelizing. Again, the Church's shows strategic foresight in their Vision 2020: "Acts 2:46, 47 tells us that God added to the Church because it was relational; they worshipped together, they visited each other and ate together, joyfully. We must be relational in our churches and in our communities to win the lost."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Vision 2020*, 4.

## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire of Licensed Women Ministers

#### *CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY*

#### MID-ATLANTIC REGION

#### SURVEY of LICENSED WOMEN MINISTERS

<b>DEMOGRAPHIC / CALLING / PLACEMENT</b>			
Age Category ( <i>circle</i> )	18-25	25-45	45-70      70+
Years saved:		Years as a Member of COGOP	
Years as a Minister: Lay Licensed		Are you Fulltime or Bi-vocational ( <i>circle</i> )      F B	
<b>Ministry Calling</b> ( <i>you may circle more than one</i> ):      Evangelist      Deaconess Children      Youth      Teacher      Prophet      Pastor      Helps Administration      Praise & Worship      Women			
From your selections above ( <b>Ministry Calling</b> ), can you place them into the following three categories: Primary _____ Secondary _____ Other _____			
Are you serving in any of the above-mentioned areas? Comment:			
<b>Ministry Call Narrative:</b> The following is a quote from <i>The Globalization of Pentecostalism</i> : “Because a woman minister preached under the control of the Holy Spirit, early Pentecostals were able to ignore the traditional qualifications for ministry. They saw authority vested in the manifestation of the Spirit, rather than in the human speaker.” Many of these women have a clearly defined call narrative which includes the following three elements: 1.   An attraction to revival or missionary work. 2.   A concrete account of her conversion and call to preach. 3.   The construction of an alternative life strategy. (Make life choices beneficial or helpful to ministry)			
<b>Call Narrative:</b> Does any or all of the above apply to you?      Yes      No			

Use the following scale to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following:

SD=Strongly Disagree    D=Disagree    N=Neutral    A=Agree    SA=Strongly Agree

1. I believe that women can now hold unrestricted license and full pastoral authority with the exception of the ordaining of elders. *2015-COGOPConciseHistory. P101.*

SD\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_ SA\_\_\_\_

2. There is sound theological foundation pertaining to women as leaders in the church.

SD\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_ SA\_\_\_\_

3. As a female minister in the COGOP, I am aware of my role, function and limitations.

SD\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_ SA\_\_\_\_

4. I function in a climate of appreciation and validation from both male and female members of my local church.

SD\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_ SA\_\_\_\_

5. I function in a climate of appreciation and validation from the church leadership within my District and Region.

SD\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_ SA\_\_\_\_

6. I believe that women should **not** be appointed to the office of pastor in the COGOP.

SD\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_ SA\_\_\_\_

7. There is a pressing need for a mentorship program for female ministers launching out as missionaries or pastors.

SD\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_ SA\_\_\_\_

8. The region offers training opportunities such as SOPAS, GCTS, Local Church Leadership Training.

Indicate the ones you have participated in and comment on your commitment to the improvement of your education and leadership development skills.

**SOPAS:** Year 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Year 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Year 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Foundations for Ministry:**

Spiritual Formation \_\_\_\_\_

History & Polity of COGOP \_\_\_\_\_

History of Christianity \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction to the Bible \_\_\_\_\_

Gordon Conwell Theological  
Seminary

\_\_\_\_\_

Other

\_\_\_\_\_

**Comment:**

9. The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. How do you envision your service in the Lord's work based on your calling and preparation?

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## VITA

Born in September 1949 in Guyana, Loretta Regina Husbands grew up in a household of committed Episcopalians. Conversion to Pentecostalism at the age of sixteen ushered in a dynamic episode in her Christian experience. She attended the Assemblies of God Bible School in Guyana from 1969 – 1972. After graduation she became a member of The Church of God of Prophecy and was active in various departments of the church. In 1977 she married a minister of the church, Andrew Husbands, and continued to co-pastor in Guyana to 1979, thereafter co-pastoring in Plumstead, London for two years. In 1990 herself and husband helped to pioneer a church on Morne Fortune in St. Lucia, working along with the Streams of Power Ministry. Herself, husband and two children migrated to the United States of America in 1993 and presently co-pastors in Clinton Maryland.

She graduated with a Master of Arts in Religion degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 2014, and subsequently enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program in January 2015. Expected date of graduation is May 2018.